



kashi

MYTH AND REALITY OF A CLASSICAL CULTURAL TRADITION

V25213^CN7
L5

BAIDYANATH
SARASWALI

This monograph seeks to re-evaluate the "ideal" image of Kashi in the light of certain basic questions: To a pilgrim or an outsider Kashi is the "microcosm of Hinduism", a "sacred city", a "traditional city", and a "city of classical culture". But, how do the inhabitants of Kashi look at themselves? How do they organize and interpret "sacred"? How do they cultivate excellence in purely secular pursuits, and how do they restore equilibrium between "sacred" and "secular" in their inner structuring and societal behaviour? What makes them a coherent cultural group possessing distinct style of life? How do they attain unity and continuity in traditions? How do they modernize their traditions, and to what extent? The book aims to present a non-conventional approach to studying the "self-view" of a classical cultural tradition in trying to answer these questions.

Rs 22.50

7
जागत क्रमांक.....2224
दिनांक.....

[illegible]

CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

**Kashi : Myth and Reality
of a Classical
Cultural Tradition**

Knowledge, Myth and Reality
Vol. 1
Cultural Tradition

**Kashi : Myth and Reality
of a Classical
Cultural Tradition**

BAIDYANATH SARASWATI

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY, SIMLA

CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

Book : Myth and Reality
of a Classical
Cultural Tradition

Kashi : Myth and Reality of a Classical Cultural Tradition

BAIDYANATH SARASWATI

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY, SIMLA

CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

V25213'N7
L5

❀ मध्यम वे वेदाङ्ग पुस्तकालय ❀	
आगत क्रमांक	2224
दिनांक	

To the memory of my beloved Guru

PROFESSOR NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

Contents

	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
	<i>Foreword</i>	xi
	Introduction	1
ONE	Continuity in Tradition	5
TWO	Guardians of Cultural Traditions	13
THREE	Varieties of Sacred Traditions	33
FOUR	Sacred-Secular Continuum	41
FIVE	Self-identifiable Culture	48
SIX	Organization of Tradition	56
	<i>Glossary</i>	69
	<i>Index</i>	74



Acknowledgements

In late 1950, I visited Kashi for the first time as a Buddhist neophyte. In 1959, Professor L P Vidyarthi initiated me into the study of the sacred complex in Kashi, but unfortunately this could not be pursued because of the paucity of funds. In 1967, Dr Surajit Sinha's scholarly interest again brought me in touch with Kashi, and for two years, under the auspices of the Anthropological Survey of India, we jointly studied the ascetics of Kashi. In 1969, the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, by awarding me a Fellowship, made my work on the *Pandits* of Kashi possible. Professor Niharranjan Ray, former Director of the Institute, took very keen and kind interest throughout my work on the *Pandits* and provided all possible facilities. In 1971, I submitted a detailed scheme on the sacred complex in Kashi to Professor Vidyarthi who secured a financial grant from the Indian Council of Social Science Research, and selected a team of young researchers to assist me. My young talented colleagues in this scheme, Mr Magananda Jha, Dr Makhan Jha, Mr Arbind Kumar, Dr Sachindra Narain, Mr Omkar Prasad, and Mr Bhola Nath Sahay, have since then enriched me greatly with their insight and findings. Grateful acknowledgement is sincerely extended to all of them, especially Professor Ray, Dr Sinha, and Professor Vidyarthi, for their invaluable help and for advising me as specialists.

Professor S C Dube, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, kindly suggested that I should consolidate my observations and empirical studies of the cultural complex in Kashi and get them published in the form of a preliminary report before undertaking the major monograph on the study. His suggestion had for me the force of a commission in preparing this small volume. I am unboundedly indebted to him for his personal inspirations and also for contributing a valuable Foreword.

My thanks are also due to Mr T Prem Kumar, Dr R R Mehrotra, Mr S P Mittal, and Dr S N Shukla for many useful suggestions; to Mr O P Nagpal, Mr Hiru Ram, and Mrs Vijayalakshmi Rao of the Institute for preparing the typescript and to Mr S Atibal for photographic illustrations.

BAIDYANATH SARASWATI

Foreword

Sacred centres occupy an important place in classical civilizations characterized by prominent religious emphases. Glorified by myth and legend and sanctified by religion, these centres not only attract pilgrims and worshippers in large numbers but they also function as important seats of learning where sacred knowledge is perpetuated, interpreted, and transferred. To understand a civilization in continuity and in change it is essential to understand the cultural role of such centres.

In the last two decades some important work has been done on the sacred centres of the Hindus. Professor L P Vidyarthi's study on Gaya was a pioneering effort in this field. Some of his students have carried forward his tradition and have produced useful studies on other centres. The Indian Institute of Advanced Study has also supported some significant work in this area. Our canvas is wider and there is a perceptible shift in the focus of our studies. Two centres which have been studied by scholars associated with the Institute are Kashi—contemporary Varanasi, also popularly known as Benares, and Puri.

In his *Kashi : Myth and Reality of a Classical Cultural Tradition* Dr Baidyanath Saraswati evaluates the idealized image of Kashi against the information thrown up by respondents to a series of meaningful questions posed by him. Kashi has often been described as a microcosm of Hinduism, a sacred city, and a city of traditional or classical culture. Though not wholly unconcerned with these stereotypes and images, in this book Dr Saraswati's main concern is to understand the self-view of those who live in Kashi and operate its traditions. The questions to which he addresses himself are: How do the inhabitants of Kashi look at themselves? What is their understanding and interpretation of the sacred? How do they organize and operate diverse activities related to the sacred? How do they balance and

harmonize the sacred and the secular in their day-to-day activities and in their general scheme of life? What makes them a more or less coherent group possessing a distinctive style of life? How have they managed to attain unity and continuity of traditions? To what extent and how have they modernized their traditions?

In answering these questions Dr Saraswati has offered an exceedingly perceptive and lucid "insider's view" of the sacred phenomena related to Kashi. The value of his work is enhanced by the concern he has had for native categories of thought and for the meanings the people themselves give to the elements and symbols in their sacred complex. Though small in size, *Kashi : Myth and Reality of a Classical Cultural Tradition* is an important contribution to the sociology of religion and to the emerging interest in developing new conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches to understanding Indian civilization.

May, 1975

S C Dube
Director

Indian Institute of Advanced Study
Rashtrapati Nivas, Simla

Introduction

Three cities, Rome, Mecca, and Kashi, need no introduction. So far as the continuity of the classical tradition is concerned, Kashi surpasses all the civilizational centres of the world. And yet it is a puzzling city, a city which has infinite capacity to absorb the most beauteous and bear the most repulsive things. It is like Shiva—the *Nilakantha*—the supreme deity of the city.

On entering the holy city of Kashi (Banaras or Varanasi as it is also known) one is struck by the crowds of pilgrims followed by rapacious *pandas*, hustling through narrow stinking lanes, infested with dreadful fighting bulls and insidious monkeys, to small untidy temples. If a visitor goes during the convenient hour of the day from the Varanasi railway station to the Dasasht wamedha *ghat* he will meet, while gambling with his life during the 20-minute ride in a cycle rickshaw, at least, half a dozen *sanyasis* in ochre robes and one or two naked *babas* trailing the rickshaw. Right on the Dasashtwamedha *ghat* he will find *Akhara Gadhanath*, with young robust Ahirs wrestling, and some distance away is another kind of *akhara*, *Awahana Akhara Dasnam Shambhu Panch*, the seat of the once-fighting *Dasnami Naga Sanyasis*. In the neighbourhood is yet another *akhara*, *Sri Yogiraj Sri 108 Bhagwandasjika Akhara Khak Chauk* where the visitor can see *Ramawat sadhus* smoking *charas* and *ganja*. More than these, the beauteous bathing scenes of pilgrims, the activities of the *ghatias* sitting under huge bamboo umbrellas, the boatmen haggling with the tourists for a ride offering a charming view of the colossal *ghats* on the Ganges, and again the bulls and beggars and the lepers cannot escape his notice. Straying into the city, the visitor may enter the *Kachauri gali* with its small, dirty, rotten shops serving *kachauri* and *rabri* to their crowded clientele. If he is unable

to come out of the *chakravyuha* lanes, the visitor may at once follow a funeral procession carrying a decorated bier and shouting *Ram-nam sat hai* to the everburning cremation *ghat* of Manikarnika and there meet strange looking Domas claiming descent from Kalua Doma, the legendary king of Kashi. From there the visitor may take a boat and conveniently reach Dasashwamedha *ghat* once again, counting the massive monasteries, magnificent palaces of the Hindu princes from all over India, and the countless spires of temples and mosques during the ride. On disembarking at the *ghat* if the visitor wants to return to his camp through Godolia, the heart of the city, flooded by the streams of uncanny traffic, he will definitely spoil his clothes, on being a little careless, from the reckless spitting of betel juice by the passers-by, who are so unconcerned about others. On loitering in Godolia even for 10 minutes he is destined to bump into, if not collide with, a robust man with red *gamachha* on his shoulder, and not unlikely by the semi-naked, funny dressed hippies who have recently taken a refuge in this sacred city. All these may at once drive away the casual visitor from this mad city.

But ask a devout Hindu from any part of India what he thinks of Kashi, and you will find in him so much love, so much charm, and so much adoration for this unique city of Vishwanath. When Pandit Kashinath Jha, who has taken to *kshetra sanyas*, was asked as to why did he choose to spend the rest of his life in Kashi, as an answer he quoted a Sanskrit verse: "In this unreal world there are only four realities—stay in Kashi, in the company of the ascetics, bath in the Ganges, and worship Shiva". Explaining the importance of Kashi as one of the seven *puris*¹ of India, Panditraj Rajeshwra Shastri Dravida said : In all other *puris* people die to be reborn in Kashi for getting salvation once for all. According to Pandit Gopinath Kabiraj, when some one dies in Kashi, the spiritual air of this place is such that his soul leaves the body and goes straight to *brahmanda*, while at another place

¹The seven *puris* are : Ayodhya, Mathura, Haridwara, Kashi, Kanchi, Ujjain, and Dwarka.

it is carried away by the wind of one's own *karma* and so many other factors. When a *virakta vaishnavā* ascetic was asked as to why did he choose to stay in Kashi, the city of Shiva, when Ayodhya, the seat of his *aradhya*, is so near, he replied that Sant Tulsidas stayed in Kashi for many years and composed the celebrated *Ramayana*, and after all what Shiva gives in Kashi in the form of *taraka mantra* (the *mantra* by which one gets salvation) is nothing else than *Rama nama*. One day an illiterate young Brahman came to the author in search of a job. He has been making a living in Kashi for several years by taking some odd jobs as a night watchman, a cook, and the carrier of the holy water. When the author offered him a permanent job in Calcutta he replied that if the god provides him some grams to eat and the Ganges water to drink he would never leave Kashi, the court of Vishwanath.¹ When transferred to his home city, the Director of the Varanasi station of All India Radio felt extremely unhappy. He told the author that Kashi is such a mysterious place, that whosoever came here was captivated by its charm: the Ganges came and lost her way here, and so instead of flowing from north to south, she changed her natural course and began to flow from south to north (*uttaravahini*); when mango, the king of fruits, came to Banaras it became lame (*langara ama*) so that it may not go elsewhere; and when Harischandra, the most illustrious and truthful king whose adherence to his word is proverbial, came to Varanasi he was sold to a Doma—an untouchable caste. Even thieves hold Kashi in highest esteem, so says Ballaldeva of Kashi (16th century) in his celebrated work the *Bhojaprabandha*.²

¹*Chana chabena gangajal, jyon purave kartar; kashi kabahun na chehariye, Vishwanath darbar.*

²שׁוֹנֵה רִגְלֵי בְּהוּיָה (10th century) was roaming on the road at night two thieves were wandering. Of the two, one, whose name was Shakunta asked the second thief, Marala, as to what he would do with the heap of gold stolen from the king's treasury. Marala replied that his father who used to commit thefts since his childhood has given up this sinful profession and now becoming indifferent to 'this worldly' pleasure would come to Kashi with his family. This store of wealth is meant for his sake. Sakunta remarked that Marala's father is extremely fortunate, for

"Can the wretched Indra stand a match for the dog who is infused with the longing for an abode in the city of Kashi (108)?"

"The city of Kashi is a barren field for the action-corns wherein the low and the learned get salvation without the distinction of caste and creed (109)."

"Who can estimate the value of Kashi wherein death is but a blessing, ashes are but an ornament and the lion-cloth but a silken garment (110)?"

Whatever exaggeration, ethnocentricism, and superstition the above responses may carry, they certainly give an idea of an ineffable charm and reverence and affection the Hindus of different classes and from different linguistic regions of India have for this puzzling sacred city. The discomforts of the city are no concern to a devout Hindu pilgrim. He is not frightened by the fighting bulls or the insidious monkeys; the stinking lanes do not suffocate him, and the rapaciousness of the *pandas* or the booming crowds do not bother him much. While he is aware of all the inconveniences, exploitations, and dirt and filth he continues to hold this city of bliss in highest regard. To a student of civilization this city presents a bewildering array of human organization.

This monograph is an attempt to understand and define that complex organization. It seeks to re-evaluate the "myth" and reality of Kashi in the light of certain basic questions: To a pilgrim or an outsider Kashi is the "microcosm of Hinduism", a "sacred city", a "traditional city", and a "city of classical culture". But, how do the inhabitants of Kashi look at themselves? How do they organize and interpret "sacred"? How do they cultivate excellence in purely secular pursuits, and how do they restore equilibrium between "sacred" and "secular" in their inner structuring and societal behaviour? What makes them a coherent cultural group possessing a distinct style of life? How do they attain unity and continuity in traditions? How do they modernize their traditions, and to what extent? Each of these questions deserves a separate volume, and even a synoptic account of Kashi's cultural traditions requires more facts than what has been provided in the following pages. But the aim of this work will be accomplished even if it serves to remind the readers of a non-conventional approach to studying the "self-view" of a culture, and much less the nature and treatment of sacred in a classical cultural tradition.

Chapter One

Continuity in Tradition

Long and Chequered History

Kashi with its long and continuous history is on the forefront in the civilizational history of India. Mythology dates this ancient city to the early period of creation. As the legend has it, at the request of seven *rishis* who wanted to be shown a road to salvation, Vishnu created a sound which shone in glorious effulgence. Originally a span in width, it grew and diffused itself in a radius of five *kosas* (ten miles). This was Kashi, the centre of the first created spot on the earth.

The archaeological excavations at Rajghat (near Kashi city) indicate the existence of a continuous cultural sequence from the beginning of the first millenium B.C. to the modern times in this area. The excavations have revealed an enormous clay rampart dating back to the 8th-7th century B.C.

Numerous references in the ancient Hindu scriptures point to the existence of Kashi as a well-developed city. The earliest dynasty ruling over Kashi claimed its descent from Manu; Kasa, the seventh king of this dynasty, gave Kashi its name. In the *Jatakas*, Kashi was the name of the kingdom, of which Varanasi was the capital. The *Puranas* show that the city was so named, because it is situated between the two rivers—the Varuna and the Assi. During the Moghul period, as Abul Fazal says, the city of Varanasi was commonly called Banaras—a name by which the city has been known till 1956. On 24 May 1956 (the day of Buddha Purnima) the name of the city was officially changed from Banaras to Varanasi.

Although the earliest descriptions of the city may be traced back to the late Vedic times (1400-1000 B.C.), as one of the first

Aryan settlements in the middle Gangetic Valley, Kashi was referred to in various Sanskrit texts, such as the *Jabalopanishada* of the *Yajurveda*; the *Sankha Smriti*; the *Parsara Smriti*; the *Mahabharata*; the *Ramayana*; the *Bhagwata*; the *Devi Bhagwata*; the *Sanata Kumar Purana*; the *Shiva Purana*; the *Linga Purana*; the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*; the *Naradiya Purana*; the *Adi Brahma Purana*; the *Matsya Purana*; the *Padma Purana*; the *Vamana Purana*; the *Agni Purana*; the *Markande Purana*; the *Vayu Purana*; the *Saur Purana*; the *Bhavisya Purana*; and the most important, the *Skanda Purana* in which the 4th *khand* is the *Kashi khand*. From such numerous references in practically all the important scriptures of the Hindus it seems that Kashi remained a city of distinction even in ancient times.

Definite historical events began to shape Kashi from the time of the *Mahabharata* (c.1400 B.C.), which mentions the king of Kashi as an ally of the Pandavas. During the early centuries of the first millenium B.C., Kashi flourished contemporaneously with the kingdoms of Magadha, Kausambi, Kosala, Uttar Panchal, and Hastinapur. Much before the advent of the Buddha, Kashi gained considerable importance. It has been the birth place of the seventh Jain Tirthankara, Sri Suparasanath, and also of the twenty-third Tirthankara, Sri Paraswanath. By the time of Sri Paraswanath (8th century B.C.) Jainism had already found its way in Kashi, and two centuries later the Buddha arrived in the city.

In order to provide a glimpse of the various cultural phases which the city has passed through, a chronological sequence of the important events that took place in Kashi from ancient times is recorded in Table 1.

Gleaning through the major events associated with Kashi, it becomes obvious that Kashi has been linked with many important land-marks in the history of India. Two things may be noted in this connection : (1) Practically all the luminaries of India have been associated with Kashi in some way or the other (2) Although Kashi has been the prime mover of social revolution and cultural reform movements, from the time of the Buddha to Ramananda and Kabir, one cannot quite say that at any time in history it has minimised the importance of the orthodox Brahmanism.

TABLE 1

CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS OF KASHI

<i>Ancient Period 1000 B.C.—A.D.999</i>	
—	Suparasnath, the 7th Jain Tirthankara was born in Kashi
8th century B.C.	Paraswanath, the 23rd Jain Tirthankara was born in Kashi
7th to 1st century B.C.	Annexation of Kashi to Kosala, Magadha, and Kausambi
6th century B.C.	The first preaching of the Buddha at Sarnath, near Kashi
240 B.C.	Ashoka visited Kashi
4th century A.D.	Gupta rule
490 A.D.	Building of the Vishwanath temple, perhaps, for the first time
5th century A.D.	Fa-Hien visited Kashi
6th century A.D.	The Veershaivism was established; foundation of the Jungambari <i>matha</i>
7th century A.D.	Huien-Tsang visited Kashi
8th century A.D.	Shankaracharya stayed in Kashi and composed his celebrated commentary on the <i>Brahmasutra</i> ; perhaps visited the city twice.
	The rule of the Palas
9th century A.D.	The rule of the Pratihara
10th century A.D.	The rule of the Chedis
<i>Mediaeval Period : A.D. 1000–1750</i>	
1013	Ahmed Nialtagin plundered the city and demolished Hindu temples
12th century	The rule of the Gahadawala
	Ramanujacharya visited Kashi
1194	Qutb-Uddin-Aibak demolished the Vishwanath temple
1294	Sant Jnaneshwara visited Kashi
13th century	Ala-Uddin demolished 1000 Hindu temples
13th-14th century	Turko-Afghan domination
14th-15th century	Ramananda settled in Kashi, founded a sub-sect of Vaishnavism
15th century	Sharqui's rule
15th century	Raidas became the disciple of Ramananda
1440-1518	Kabir born in Kashi, preached neo-Vaishnavism
1469-1539	Guru Nanak visited the city and had <i>shastrartha</i> with the <i>pandits</i> of Kashi
1478-1530	Vallabhacharya settled here in the later part of his life, and died in Kashi
1485-1533	Chaitanyadeva lived here for many years
1494	Sikandar Lodi demolished 1000 temples

TABLE I (Contd.)

1532-1623	Tulsidas composed the famous <i>Ramacharitmanas</i> between 1574-84 and died here in the year 1623
1567	Akbar defeated Jaichanda, the king of Kashi, and established a mint in Kashi
1585	Restoration of the Vishwanath temple by Todarmal
1600	Construction of Manmandir <i>ghat</i> and about 1000 temples by Raja Man Singh of Ajmer
1628	Renovation of Gyanbapi by Baija bai, the queen of Gwalior
1655-56	Darashikoha translated the <i>Upanishads</i> into Persian with the help of 150 <i>pandits</i> of Kashi
1664	Battle of Gyanbapi between the <i>Dasnami Naga Sanyasis</i> and the army of Aurangzeb
1666	Shivaji found a refuge with the Brahmins of Kashi on his flight from the court of Aurangzeb
1697	Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur built an observatory
17th century	Shahjahan demolished 76 temples
18th century	Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Kashi
1722	The rule of the Nawab of Oudh
1725	The establishment of the Kashi Raj

Modern Period : A.D. 1751-1947

1752	The building of the fort of Ramnagar
1757	The East India Company gains control
1773	Warren Hastings visited Kashi
1777	Ahilyabai, the queen of Indore, constructed the Vishwanath temple
1791	Construction of the Manikarnika <i>ghat</i>
1794	Foundation of Sanskrit College
1810	The formation of Municipal Board
1817	Protest against <i>ghar-chari</i> tax
1839	Maharaja Jainarain Ghossal opened the first English school
1845	The gilding of the Vishwanath temple by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh
1851	Marwari Hindu Hospital was established
1852	<i>Kali andhi</i> or black storm
	<i>Goralasahi</i> movement
1855	Demolition of <i>barahphatak</i> (twelve gates) in Madanapura
1857	Wazid Ali Shah visited Kashi
1860	Mutiny
1826	Fire in Puranichauk
	Rail link between Moghulsarai and

Varanasi

TABLE I (Contd.)

1866	Organization of the Mahapalika
1868	Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa visited Kashi
1869	Swami Dayananda visited Kashi
1872	First census
1866-85	Bharatendu Harischandra
1887	Opening of rail-cum-road bridge on the Ganges (Duffrin bridge, now Malaviya bridge)
1888	Establishment of the Church Missionary Society
1891	<i>Ramahalla</i> movement
1892	Water works established
1893	The Nagari Pracharini Sabha was founded
1897	The foundation of the Hindu College by Mrs. Annie Besant
1902	Establishment of the Bharata Dharma Maha Mandala by Swami Gyanananda
1905	Foundation of the Syadbad Maha Vidyalyaya
1909	Foundation of the Banaras Hindu University
1917	Mahatma Gandhi's first political speech in the Banaras Hindu University
1920	Foundation of the Kashi Vidyapeetha by Mahatma Gandhi
1928	Electrification
1934	Earthquake on 15th January at 2.30 p.m.
1937	Opening of the Bharata Mata Mandir by Mahatma Gandhi
1941	Establishment of the Dharma Sangha by Swami Karpatrijee
1942	Quit India movement
1947	Independence

Continuity in Classical Tradition

Several centuries before Christ, Ajatasatru, the king of Kashi defeated the Brahman Gargya in the *shastrartha* on a philosophical issue, and Gautam the Buddha turned here, in Isipatan (Sarnath), the wheel of his *dharma*. In course of time Kashi grew as a great seat of learning, surpassing Takshashila and all other educational centres of India. Huien-Tsang was struck by the scholarship and devotion of the Brahman students and the Jain and the Buddhist ascetics of Kashi in the 7th century. Earlier, in the 5th century, Fa-Hien noted that here in this great

city there were thirty monasteries and about three thousand Buddhist priests, and the Hindus had about one hundred temples with ten thousand sectaries and their principal god was Maheshwara whose copper image was hundred feet high. The ancient travelogues also indicate that the Brahman, the Jain, and the Buddhist scholars lived in great harmony while engaged in their pursuits of learning.

In later times Kashi gained a high reputation and attracted scholars from far and near. It became famous for the assembly of the *pandits*, which organized *shastrartha* on matters of socio-religious importance. Any decision arrived at by the assembly of the *pandits* of Kashi was accepted as the norm by the entire Brahman community. The chief source of the Banaras School of Law, one of the five recognized schools of Hindu Law, was Vijnaneshwara, the author of the *Mitākshara*, of the 12th century. Bernier described in detail the methods of study of the *pandits* of Kashi in 1667. When Ward visited Kashi in 1917 he found forty-eight teachers instructing eight hundred ninety-three pupils in the *Vedas* only, and seventeen teaching two hundred eighteen disciples the mysteries of the Pannini's grammar. The lamp of Sanskrit learning has been kept luminously alive in Kashi even to this day, particularly by the Maharashtra and Kannada Brahman families who migrated to the city at the beginning of the 16th century. These families remained at the helm of Sanskrit scholarship for no less than three centuries; later the *pandits* from Mithila and Bengal came to their support.

Besides being the leading centre for the study of religion, philosophy, medical sciences, and astrology Kashi had enjoyed reputation for its handicrafts and commerce, even during the pre-Buddhist period. The Banarsi silk fabrics were exported to all parts of India. It was famous for perfumes, scented oil, ivory works, and sculpture. Kashi's contributions to Indian vocal music are the melodious *thumari*, *dadra*, and *tappa*.

Modern Kashi continues to accentuate the growth of scholastic and artistic traditions associated with it for centuries.

Continuity in Sacred Tradition

The sacred geography of Kashi has been adequately described in the *Puranas*. It has been stated that its physical appearance

has been changing with successive *yugas*. In the *Satya Yuga* Kashi was like a *trisula* (trident); in the *Treta Yuga* it was like a circle; in the *Dwapara Yuga* it assumed the form of a charriot; and in the *Kali Yuga* it has the form of a *shankha* (conch shell). According to the *Padma Purana*, the Kashi-kshetra runs into an area which today is known as the *panchakosi kshetra*, and within this lies Varanasi with the rivers Varuna and Assi, on the north and south, and the river Ganges and the shrine of Pasupani Vinayaka on the east and west respectively. Varanasi has been further divided into three *khandas* (segments): (1) Omkar *khand*; (2) Visheshwara *khand*; and (3) Kedarkhand. The landmarks in the boundaries of these *khandas* have also been mentioned in the *Puranas*, and it is said that the centre of Kashi is the shrine of Madhyameshwara Mahadeo. Extending from this centre to the shrine of Dehali Vinayaka or Sodas Vinayaka is the radius which marks the area of the Kashi-kshetra. In the popular oral tradition Kashi is again divided into two zones: (1) Shiva Kashi and (2) Vishnu Kashi, with Manikarnika as the dividing line between them. From the river Assi to Manikarnika is Shiva Kashi and from Manikarnika to the river Varuna is Vishnu Kashi.

The tradition has it that all the sacred shrines (*tirthas*) of India are located in the Kashi-kshetra. The *Skanda Purana* lists about four hundred fifty shrines, of which, at least, three hundred thirty shrines exist today. If the *Pauranic* map of Kashi, showing its sacred geography, is superimposed on a contemporary map of the city, the continuity in the planning of sacred shrines can easily be established. For instance, according to the *Padma Purana*, the shrine of Madhyameshwara Mahadeo is the centre of Kashi-kshetra, and the present site of this shrine near Maidagin clearly corroborates the *Pauranic* description. The same *Purana* also mentions that the shrine of Gokarneshwara Mahadeo is located west of the shrine of Manikarnikeshwara while the shrine of Brahmeshwara Mahadeo lies south of the shrine of Bharbhuteshwara; on the west of the city is enshrined Pashupani Vinayaka. The present locations of all these shrines corroborate this statement.

This continuity in the *Pauranic* geography of Kashi has been maintained largely by the custom of *panchakosi parikrama* which thousands of pilgrims follow by circumambulating

periodically within the radius of five *kosas* from Varanasi. This forms the *Kashi-kshetra*. The *panchakosi* route clearly shows that the *Pauranic* order of the shrines is followed and the pilgrims tread on a path which gives the boundary of the *Kashi-kshetra* a shape that closely resembles a *shankha*, as acclaimed by the *Skanda Purana*. The inner holy circuit of Kashi, known as *antargrihi parikrama*, covers practically all the important shrines within the present municipal limits of the city. Besides these holy circuits, there are sixty *yatras* (fairs) observed periodically in the various shrines of Kashi.

The fact that Shiva continues to be the presiding god of the *Kashi-kshetra* from the inception is no less important. However, it appears that his name has been changing from time to time. When Fa-Hien visited Kashi in the 5th century the principal god of this city was Maheshwara, who later acquired the name of Visheshwara; and now Vishwanath is his most popular name. The first temple for this god was built in A.D. 490. It was demolished several times by the invading iconoclasts and rebuilt by devout Hindus.

Similarly, the methods of worship and festivals associated with Vishwanath and other shrines of Kashi continue to be what the *Puranas* have described thousands of years ago.

Chapter Two

Guardians of Cultural Traditions

Kashi could maintain its cultural traditions over such a long period because of certain ingeniously built-in institutions in the system. These institutions have, of course, no formal organization in the sense that there is no centralized authority to activate them either individually or collectively. The system of periodical *panchakosi parikrama* and *yatras* continues to guard the frontiers of sacred tradition in Kashi without the support of a temporal power or a formal organization. The *Puranas* have prescribed the dates and the procedure of the *panchakosi* pilgrimage. These *Pauranic* flats continue to draw people periodically to the holy circuits. Yet, one cannot say that this happens year after year without any human effort. In this "mechanical" age people have lesser time to devote to pilgrimage and lesser energy to walk the distance of *parikrama* route. And this reduces the number of *panchakosi parikrama* pilgrims. But then a Maharashtra Brahman, Pandit Vishwanath Shastri Datar, comes forward to promote the pilgrimage by arranging to carry the pilgrim's luggage in a motor vehicle so that the pilgrims can conveniently walk the *panchakosi* route, without being burdened by the luggage. There is no material benefit to Pandit Datar in the enterprise nor anyone has asked him to do it. He has been guided exclusively by his own conviction, and as he told the author it was his *dharma* (self-imposed duty) to strengthen the tradition of *parikrama* which has been growing weaker on account of the changed habits of pilgrims.

Individual cases like Datar's illustrate the case of a self-appointed guardian of cultural tradition. Besides such self-appointed individual guardians there are a number of institutions committed to guide the cultural traditions of Kashi. Of these the important

ones are : (1) The institution of ascetics which cultivates sacred tradition; (2) the institution of *pandits* which codifies and theorizes both sacred and secular traditions; (3) the institution of practising specialists—(a) the ritual specialists, (b) their associates and (c) artists and craftsmen; and (4) the institutions of *raja* and the *dhanapatis* which uphold the tradition by providing secular incentives to those engaged in its cultivation and preservation. In Kashi, all these institutions function independently and yet collectively share the responsibility for guarding the traditions. The organization of these institutions and their role are noted briefly here.

TABLE 2
ASCETIC POPULATION OF KASHI

Ascetic order		Population		
Major group	Sub-division	Male	Female	Total
Dasnami Sanyasi	Dandi	237	2	239
	Naga	85	6	91
	Paramhansa	288	8	296
Gorakhpantha Vaishnava		3	0	3
	Ramanuji	75	5	80
	Nimbarka	10	28	38
	Madhva	1	0	1
	Gauriya	3	0	3
	Visnuswami	30	0	30
	Ramanandi	253	5	258
	Kabirpanthi	33	1	34
	Gareebdasi	5	1	6
	Dadupanthi	2	0	2
	Gheesapanthi	3	0	3
	Swaminarayana	15	0	15
	Nirmale	15	0	15
Nihanga Sikh	Udasi	79	0	79
Bauddha		10	0	10
Others*		5	0	5
		35	41	76
Total		1,187	97	1,284

*In this group are included Vallabha, Veershaiva, Krishna-Pranami, Gyan sampradaya, Sakhi sampradaya, Harihar, Prajapita Brahmakumari, Arya Samaji, Aughar, and other ascetic orders.

Ascetics

A survey of the ascetics of Kashi¹ during 1967-69 indicated the presence of about three hundred religious institutions, called *mathas*, *ashramas*, or *akharas* in which about two thousand ascetics reside permanently. This means, the proportion of ascetics to the total Hindu population is nearly 1:150, or one out of every two hundred forty persons in Kashi is an ascetic. The ascetic population indicated above does not include the floating stream of ascetic pilgrims visiting the city at any time. This shows that the ascetics cannot be regarded as an insignificant element in the population of the city.

TABLE 3

THE NUMBER OF STATES AND LINGUISTIC GROUPS REPRESENTED IN A SINGLE MATHA OF DIFFERENT ASCETIC ORDERS

<i>Ascetic order to which the matha belongs</i>	<i>No. of states and linguistic groups represented</i>	<i>Percentage of the ascetics whose mother tongue is Hindi</i>
Dandi	4	40.00
Naga	7	20.00
Parmahansa	12	10.00
Ramanandi	7	66.70
Ramanuji	5	25.00

Practically all the *sampradayas* are represented in Kashi (Table 2). The Shaiva ascetics form the majority in the city. However there is no other sacred city in India where the various faiths have been accommodated as suitably as they are in Kashi, the city of Shiva. If the Dasnami *sanyasis* form 48.8 per cent of the ascetic population in Kashi, the Vaishnava ascetics constitute 36.6 per cent. No Vaishnava city (Ayodhya, Mathura, Dwarka, or Puri) has shown similar tolerance to the Shaivites as Kashi shows to the Vaishnavites.

Another important aspect of the organizations of ascetics in Kashi is their universalistic character—the tradition of building up the institutions on all-India level. This fact is clearly borne out by the number of states or linguistic regions represented in a single *matha* of the ascetics (Table 3).

¹Surajit Sinha and Baidyanath Saraswati; 1969, *Organizations of Ascetics in Kashi*, (unpublished), Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta.

It may be noted that the ascetics who claimed Hindi as their mother tongue live with various other language groups, such as Nepali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Peshawari, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The number of non-Hindi speakers living together in various combinations among themselves is not very large. The data show that although there are no strong prejudices among the speakers of various languages against living together in a *matha*, the Ramanandis, who are the reformist Vaishnavas, have shown greater Hindi bias. It is also important that the other four groups, who are orthodox *sanatanis*, have presented a much wider outlook on the question of linguism or regionalism, as seen by more instances of their *mathas* accommodating ascetics from diverse linguistic regions. At one extreme are the Paramhansa *mathas* in which ascetics from twelve states of India and Nepal live together.

In Brahmanic tradition the ascetics are compared to the *dhruvatarā* (polestar), for they symbolize the highest ideals which the *grihis* (householders) must try to attain. The universalistic approach of the ascetics of Kashi is in conformity with the tradition. Though ideally the ascetics are to lead the life of a recluse, in everyday life they interact with the *grihis* freely and frequently. These interactions are not necessarily dictated by the religious tenets alone. The householders are drawn to a *matha* for various reasons. Most sections of the Brahmans consider it a religious necessity to be initiated into a spiritual order by an ascetic who will become the *grihis'* *guru*. This is called *gurumukha*. Whenever such a *grihi* visits Kashi, he usually calls on at the *matha* of his *guru*. The *gurus* are invited by the householders to grace important ceremonies, like *yajnopaveeta* (sacred-thread ceremony) or *yajna*, performed in the house of a *grihi*, whether in Kashi or outside. All the *mathas* in Kashi have temples for their tutelary deities. There are also certain *mathas* which enshrine the deities mentioned in the *Kashi khanda* of the *Skanda Purana*. These temples also bring the people to the *matha*. Some of these *mathas* maintain gymnasiums, Sanskrit *pathasalas*, and Ayurvedic and Homeopathic dispensaries. These facilities draw the *grihis* and the ascetics closer. Most of the *mathas* periodically organize *katha* and *pravachana* (religious discourse) which attract people to these places. Besides

the *sthandhari* (resident) ascetics, wandering *sadhus* who come to Kashi for a brief period also stay in these *mathas*. These wandering ascetics, especially if they are known to possess supernatural power, draw large crowds of people eager to redress all sorts of mundane problems. If such a *sadhu* has the habit of taking *ganja*, all the *ganjeris* of the city flock round him.

A considerable number of ascetics do exploit the *grihis* for their self-interest; many ascetics are professional *katha-bachakas* (religious preachers) and are affluent. However such ascetics do not enjoy the same respect as those who lead the life of a recluse and spend all their time in meditation; such ascetics are considered as superior beings.

The ascetics when organized into *sampradayaic* fold are required to propagate the *dharma* among the *grihis*. The *adya* Shankaracharya (8th century A.D.) organized the ascetics into *dasnama* (ten names). He asked the ascetics of three names—Tirtha, Asrama, and Saraswati—to lead a life of *nivrti* (complete renunciation) and the rest he ordered to lead a life of *pravriti* (occupation). Shankaracharya laid down that the latter have special responsibility for protecting and enforcing the *dharma* in the same manner as a ruler is responsible for them maintenance of law and order. This is evident from the following verses of the *Mahanusasanum* composed by him:

The *acharyas* of these *mathas*¹ should follow the rules of their *dharma* according to the prescribed custom. They should not defy their *dharma* under any circumstances. In order to know how much people are anti-religious, they must tour in their respective provinces (3).

They should properly tour in their provinces to guard their nations. The *acharyas* should never stay in their *matha* permanently (4).

The norms of the *varnashrama* which we have approved according to the *shastras* must be followed in their respective provinces (5).

¹Shankaracharya established four main *peethas* in the four corners of India: Joshi *matha* in the north, Puri in the east, Sringeri in the south, and Dwarka in the west. It is also held that he established a fifth *matha* which he called *urdhva* (in the direction of the sky) *matha*; and for this he established Sumeru *matha* in Kashi.

All the four *varnas* should properly worship the *gurupeetha* by speech, mind, and bodily action, according to their respective sphere of duties (18).

The way in which the kings are entitled to collect revenues from their subjects while protecting the country, the *acharya* of the *peetha* has a similar religious right to collect taxes from his subjects (19).

In Kashi, on such explicit injunctions from the *acharyas*, Swami Gyanananda formed the Bharata Dharma Maha Mandala in 1902, and Swami Karpatrijee established the Akhil Bharata-varsiya Dharma Sangha in 1941 to guard the orthodox *sanatani* tradition against decay and defilement. Contemporaneously, while ascetics like Swami Karpatrijee feel committed to guard the orthodox Brahmanic traditions in the manner they think best, other groups of ascetics—the Ramanandis, the Kabirapanthis, the Raidasis and the followers of various other saint-based sects—in the same manner look after the cultural interests of the masses.

Besides these ascetics who are vocal and active in their efforts to guard the cultural tradition, there are also ascetics, though a small number, who remain completely detached from such efforts and "this worldly" problems, although people do often make use of their charismatic powers. Of such luminaries there was one Bheema *baba* who used to go about stark naked. Bheema *baba* lived in the highest stage in asceticism, the *turiyateeta*. He did not eat with his hand, but ate like a cow lying down on his belly and considered his body a corpse. He maintained no distinction between castes, creeds, and sex and remained completely engrossed in self-realization. He would not talk to people but a large number of devotees used to surround him. He used to live in different parts of the city, though for a long time he made the verandah of the Nichibagh Telegraph Office his residence. Many people believed that he was the god Shiva personified, and it was said that whosoever prayed to him silently had his wish fulfilled. Three years ago one morning Bheema *baba* was found missing and later it was discovered that he was dead.

Another interesting case is of a naked ascetic who lives with his wife and children. He calls himself Shiva, his wife

Parvati, and his children Gajanan, Kharanan, and Jogamaya. It is said that he was a *siddha mahatma*—an *awadhoota* living stark naked, wearing a live snake, and smearing his body with ashes from the cremation *ghat*. People began to utilize his *siddhi* and he became rich. One day, one of his disciples poisoned him and took away all the money. The wife of the *awadhoota*, after hearing the news, rushed to the scene and saved her ascetic husband who had renounced her years before. Later, she requested him that she may be permitted to serve him for the rest of her life. The *awadhoota* conceded her request and declared that there is *paravati tattva* (an element of the goddess Parvati) in this lady, and so the couple began to live as Shiva and Parvati. The *awadhoota* lived in his usual habit—stark naked with snakes round his neck—while his wife lived as a normal person. In course of time the strange couple had children, and people began to call them *yati* and *sati* while they considered themselves as the members of Shiva-family. It is believed that the *awadhoota* still possesses mystic powers.

Such mystics and charismatic ascetics may not play a direct role in the preservation of “this worldly” tradition, but they certainly drive people into the mystery of transcendental knowledge. And, indeed, it is on the display of such mystic powers that the common people’s faith in religion rests unshaken.

Pandits

Like in other regions of India, in Kashi the *pandits* have the exclusive credit as the custodians of textual cultural tradition. Kashi, even today, is a great seat of Sanskrit learning. It has now a Sanskrit university and about forty Sanskrit *pathashalas*. About two thousand students receive formal education in Sanskrit literature and ancient sciences at these institutions. More than these formal seats of learning, the people who really contribute to the preservation of Sanskrit tradition are the *pandits* at whose houses the students are taught under the traditional system of *guru-shisya parampara*. Kashi abounds with such *pandits*.

A survey of the *pandits* of Kashi¹ during 1969-71 indicated the presence of about fifteen hundred *pandits* proficient in

¹Baidyanath Saraswati; *Pandits of Kashi* (unpublished)

different fields of learning in Kashi. The fields of specialization of these scholars include *Sahitya-Vyakaran* (literature-grammar), *Jyotis-Ganita*, *Phalita* (astrology), *Veda*, *Nyaya-Vaisesika*, *Mimamsa*, *Vedanta*, *Sankhya Yoga*, *Tantra*, *Bauddha Darshana*, *Jain Darshana*, *Purana*, *Dharmashastra*, *Karmakanda*, *Arthashastra*, and *Ayurveda*. But what is more important than the numbers is their *nistha* (faith combined with devotion) to Sanskrit learning, which is no longer of interest to the modern elites. The *pandits* are aware of the fact that they are culturally out of focus in the modern society, yet they cling to their *shastras* and the traditional mode of learning. Indeed, most *pandits* of Kashi today live and breathe in an atmosphere of the middle ages, refusing to recognize and take any notice of the passage of time. How and why their attitude has hardened towards the changes in society is a question that need not be answered at this point. But what we are presently interested in is their mode of perserving the tradition, whatever worth that may be.

Of the subjects of Sanskrit learning only *Jyotish* and *Ayurveda* can help a person make an independent living. Of the two branches of *Jyotish* only the *Phalita Jyotish* is popular in Kashi, and indeed a number of *pandits* of Kashi have become rich and affluent by practising the *Bhrigusamhita*. The *Ayurveda* becomes a "profitable" subject of learning only when it is combined with the system of modern medicine. But the subjects like *Nyaya-Mimamsa*, *Dharmashastra*, and the *Vedas* are no longer the *arthakari vidya* (money-earning subjects). Yet, a large number of Maharashtra and South Indian *pandits* in Kashi continue to learn the *Vedas*, that too by the rote method.¹

Apart from preserving the learned tradition, the *pandits* of Kashi have organized themselves to retain the archaic *varna* order (caste system). They opposed Gandhijee's movements

¹The author once asked a *ghanapathi* (one who can recite the various combinations and permutations of the *Vedic Samhita*) why should he labour on this obsolete mode of learning which is no longer in demand. He replied that first of all it is his *dharma* to preserve the *Vedas*, and secondly if he does not recite the *Vedic mantras* in the prescribed manner he is committing more sin than gaining anything else. In his recent visit to South India the author was told by many specialists in *Vedic* learning that Kashi is the only place in India where the *Vedic* recitation has retained its pristine purity. Of course, it is only the South Indian and the Maharashtra *pandits* in Kashi who are jealously guarding this heritage of Indian classical tradition.

against the inequality of *varna* system. During the freedom movement, there were two groups of *pandits* in Kashi. One group, supported by the Hindu princely states, remained more or less indifferent, if not openly opposed to the freedom of the country, and established the Varnashrama Swaraja Sangha. Another group of *pandits*, under the leadership of Mahamana Malaviya, supported the freedom movement wholeheartedly. Since Independence the Varnashrama Swaraja Sangha has been considerably weakened, yet whenever opportunities arise it leaves no stone unturned to press its demand for establishing the supremacy of the *varna* order. Some members of the Sangha who left the organization on account of some personal conflict, formed new institutions with more or less the same objectives. These new institutions, some with purely religious motives and some even with political ends, have come up largely with the support of Swami Karpatrijee. The Vidwata Parishada, for instance, is as an institution of scholars engaged in the promotion of learned tradition, whereas the Rama Rajya Parishada is essentially a political party whose aim is the preservation of the *varnashrama* by constitutional means. But both these institutions operate in close collaboration on such issues as the Hindu Code Bill, the Harijan entry into Vishwanath temple, and the *gohatya andolan* (movement against cow slaughter). On such matters, they also join with the Bharata Dharma Mahamandala, the Dharma Sangha, and other institutions in which the ascetics are at the helm of affairs.

Another method by which the *pandits* guard their tradition is the projection of the image of "ideal Brahman" among common people. Several *pandits* of Kashi lead an austere life and voluntarily impose on themselves hardships and poverty. This, undoubtedly, has a deeper impact on the minds of the common people who find the Brahmans, self-imposed poverty and hardships as reflections of the highest quality of life which the modern intellectuals seldom possess.¹ By means of such "image projection" the *pandits* of Kashi continue to impart successfully the traditional values to the common masses who otherwise are no longer prepared to accept their supremacy.

¹Pandit Gopinath Kabiraj, whom the people from all walks of life in Kashi hold in high esteem, is one such "ideal Brahman."

Practising Specialists

Of the guardians of cultural traditions, the ascetics and the *pandits* cultivate, preserve, and promote the tradition by verbal "magic". They are also the persons who prescribe norms and values. So far as the textual tradition is concerned they are also the specialists and the final authority. Then there are specialists of the second rank—the practioners. They fall into second rank of classical specialists because in case of dispute regarding their subject, the matter is referred to the theorists—the *pandits* or the ascetics. For instance, a temple priest is a specialist in temple rituals as he practises the ritual art; but should some one challenge his method of performing a particular rite the words of the priest cannot be taken for granted; the only person who can give the *nirnaya*, *vyavastha* or *paddhati* (final decision) in such matters is the *dharmadhikari*. In fact, the relationship between the theorists and the practitioners in the Indian classical tradition is the same that exists elsewhere between the scientists and the technicians.

Ritual Specialists

In Kashi, there are ritual specialists of various kinds, and although each of the practising groups has tried to monopolise its profession, there are overlapping functions.

Pujaris. The *pujaris* or the temple priests are of two kinds: (1) self-employed and (2) employed by temple managements (individuals or institutions). The *pujaris*, in general, are not a hereditary endogamous group, although there are cases of priests holding the occupation for four or five generations. The priests in the four Vishwanath temples are the paid servants and their services can be dispensed with by the temple authorities. Some priests also own the temples in which they officiate.

In most Brahmanic shrines the Brahmans are the priests, but there are also cases of non-Brahmans acting there as priests. In the Durgamata *mandir* located in village Aditya Nagar on the *panchakosi* route, for instance, a Kunbi (a member of a vegetable-growing caste) is the priest. In the non-Brahmanic temples, however, there is no such restriction, both Brahmans and non-Brahmans are employed as priests.

Karmakandis. The term *karmakandi* literally means the one who makes a living by performing rituals for others; but in common parlance it stands for those who perform the *Vedic* rituals—*yajna*, *abhisheka*, and *samskara* rituals. In Kashi, to distinguish themselves from those who have no knowledge of the *Vedic yajnas*, the learned *karmakandis* prefer to be called *yajnikas*. Their main function is to perform the *Vedic* rites for others. They are conversant with the knowledge necessary for performing all the textual rituals, but as a functional group they are neither endogamous nor do they adhere to their occupation hereditarily. The Maharashtra and the South Indian Brahmans are considered to be good *karmakandis* who perform the rituals strictly according to the *shastric* injunctions. They are also the ones who use only Sanskrit *mantras* at the time of performing the rituals. The *karmakandis* also function as the *pujaris* of a temple.

Ghatias. The *ghatias* perform rituals for others and accept *dana* (ritual gift) at the *ghats* on the Ganges. The *shastras* have condemned those Brahmans who take *dana* in a *tirtha*, and hence the profession of a *ghatia* who accepts *dana* at the *ghat* on the Ganges is considered lowly. In order to overcome this disability and also since their main source of livelihood is the river Ganges the *ghatias* often call themselves *gangaputra* (the sons of the Ganges). But this hardly makes any difference in the social hierarchy, as they continue to accept gifts from their clients on the banks of the Ganges. A *ghatia* is different from a *karmakandi* who also performs rituals at the *ghat* but will not accept *dana* from his clients on the banks of the Ganges. (He will, of course, take whatever *dana* and *dakshina* or remuneration for ritual services the client may give him in his house.) In actual practice, the average *ghatia* performs very little ritual, his general function is to guard the garments of the bathers and to put *tilak* mark on the foreheads of his clients. But if the pilgrim bathers want to perform some rituals at the *ghat*, he will assist them in doing so. The rituals at the *ghats* are generally connected with various kinds of *danas* and ancestor worship; the only ritual connected with the worship of a god is the *Ganga-pujan* (the worship of the Ganges) which has fewer rites than in the case of the idol worship. However, some

ghatias keep a *shaligram* (a kind of Vishnu idol of black stone) and brass idols of Ganesh and other gods at the *takhata* (wooden platform) where they sit under a bamboo umbrella. The pilgrims who may like to worship these deities immediately after bathing may do so with the assistance of the *ghatia*. But this is not what all *ghatias* do. Some of them may also be called upon to perform the *dana* rituals, and hence they keep a cow or a calf ready for conducting the *godan* (offering of a cow) rituals. However, in practice for those who do not stress on *shastric* rituals, a *ghatia* is everything. The *shastric* knowledge of most *ghatias* is limited to a few Sanskrit *mantras*. They generally conduct rituals perfunctorily in vernacular.

There are three kinds of *ghatias* in Kashi: (1) Those who have proprietary rights on the *ghat* where they conduct the rituals; (2) those who have taken the *ghat* on lease for conducting rituals; and (3) those who are the servants of the proprietor of the *ghats*. The *ghatias* belonging to categories (1) and (2) are in this profession for several generations, but those belonging to category (3) are in most cases new recruits. But as a class they are not an endogamous group, though most of them are Saryupari Brahmans. The families of the *ghatias* are looked down upon, and orthodox Brahmans will not enter into matrimonial relations with the *ghatias*. In the circumstances, a *ghatia* either takes a Brahman woman from a lower rank or takes non-Brahman concubines. In either case he slides down further in the social status.

Pandas. The term *panda* is so well-known to the pilgrims that it is loosely applied to practically all the ritual specialists with whom the pilgrims come into contact. For instance, even for a *ghatia* the term of address is *pandaji*, for no one likes to be addressed as *ghatia*. This ambiguity in the use of the term has made the *pandas* a controversial community in sociological literature. But if one critically examines their role in a pilgrim centre, it will come out that they are essentially pilgrim guides whose main function is to assist the pilgrims in such matters as accommodation, food and cooking, visiting shrines, and performing rituals. In most pilgrim centres, such as Gaya and Deoghar, the *pandas* have also the proprietary rights on the main shrine, or as in the case of Puri they hold exclusive rights

on temple services. And hence in such places they are both priests and pilgrim-guides. In Kashi, the situation is different. The main shrine of Vishwanath is under the control of one Saryupari family, and the person who manages the temple administration designates himself as the *mahantha*. Therefore, unlike at Deoghar, Gaya, and Puri, the main shrine in Kashi is not owned and/or managed by a community of priests who call themselves *pandas*. Nevertheless there are in Kashi groups of *pandas* who claim that they are the traditional priests of all the shrines in Kashi. To make their claim more specific they designate themselves by the term *tirthapurohita* which literally means the "shrine priest". In fact, they are using it as a "prestigious term" in the manner the *ghatias* call themselves *gangaputras*. But in all the shrines of Kashi there are *pujaris* or *karmakandis* officiating. And this, of course, renders the claim of the *tirthapurohitas* superfluous.

The thing which marks the *pandas* or the *tirthapurohitas* off from the rest of the ritual specialists is their playing host to the pilgrims. They exercise the right of entertaining the pilgrims with whom, in most cases, they have *jajmani* relationship. The *pandas* accommodate their *jajmans* in private houses or in their family suites, a thing which no other ritual specialist will generally do. They are the persons who look after the comforts of the pilgrim *jajmans* and who try to establish and maintain contacts on hereditary basis with all the new comers. They also maintain registers recording the visits of their *jajmans*. In brief, they think in terms of establishing permanent relationship with the pilgrims.¹ In this respect the *pujaris*, the *karmakandis*, and the *ghatias* are different, for their relationship with the pilgrims, in almost all cases, is contractual which ends after performing the rituals. Thus, the essential function of a *panda* is to guide the pilgrims in all such matters that his client may seek from him. In actual practice it may happen that a *panda* also performs the job of a *karmakandi* for his *jajman*. It has also been found that in some cases a *karmakandi* gradually assumes the role of *panda*. This occurs mostly in the case of South Indian and Maharashtra *karmakandis* who

¹The author has several experiences of *pandas* in different parts of North India who wanted him to sign their registers even if he chose not to employ them for ritual services.

conveniently interact with the pilgrims from their respective linguistic regions. The South Indian *karmakandis* have formed an association, the Tirthapurohita Sangha, which functions as a South Indian pilgrim guide centre, several years ago.

At present, there are several families, from different linguistic groups, operating as *pandas*. But those who claim to be the descendants of the seven original families of the *pandas* are the local Saryupari Brahmans. Yet, unlike their counterparts in Gaya and Deoghar, the *pandas* of Kashi are not endogamous group(s), their right to receive the pilgrims has also been vague and questionable.

The institution of *pandas* created three allied groups: the *gumastas*, the *bhaddars*, and the *yatravals*. A brief description of these groups will throw more light on the function of the *pandas* in Kashi.

Gumastas. The paid servants of the *pandas* who render menial services to the pilgrims are called *gumastas*. They follow the instructions of their masters, and have no independent role to play. They may or may not be Brahmans. Their specific assignment is to bring the pilgrims from railway station or bus stop, help the pilgrims in setting up their camps, and in all such household matters which need their assistance.

Bhaddars. In Kashi, there is an interesting group of pilgrim "hunters" known as *bhaddars*. The *bhaddars* are in considerable numbers, and surprisingly enough they are the only endogamous group engaged in pilgrim service. They claim to be Joshi Brahmans whose function has been to receive the pilgrims and look after their comforts. It is alleged that they have been recently displaced from their traditional occupation by the stronger group of Saryupari Brahmans. In support of their claim some of the *bhaddars* say that they still maintain pilgrim registers and have *jajmani* relationship with pilgrims from different parts of India.

It may be noted here that in the temples of Tamil Nadu (for instance, in Madurai) the community of priests which has the exclusive right of worship in Shiva temples is called *bhattara*. The term *bhaddar* has a phonetic similarity to *bhattara*, and since the *bhaddars* of Kashi trace their descent from Joshi Brahmans

of Maharashtra, their claim as the original priests and pilgrim guides of Kashi requires a careful scrutiny.

However, as the *bhaddars* function today, they are obviously pilgrim "hunters" picking up people at the railway station or a bus stop and disposing them off to a *ghatia* or to a temple priest on a contract basis. Generally, a pilgrim is not aware of how he was 'sold out' to a *ghatia* by the person who has brought him from the railway station with the promise to guide him during his pilgrimage in Kashi. A *bhaddar* may take the pilgrim to a hotel or to a Banarsi *saree* shop, and in all these places he will receive some commission from the person he has given a customer. Only a small number of *bhaddars* act as *pandas*, in the sense, they keep the pilgrims in their houses and maintain *jajmani* relationship with them; the majority of them indulge in pilgrim "hunting" and have ill-repute in the city.

Yatrawals. The *yatrawals* are not different from the *bhaddars* in their relation to the pilgrims, excepting that while the latter look for the pilgrims at the railway and bus stations, the former pick up the pilgrims near the temple gates and take them to the neighbouring shrines for an "easy access" or "private access" to the deity by keeping off the crowd. They are found hovering about the main Vishwanath temple and also around some other important shrines. It is said that they were once the *gumastas* of the *pandas* who now independently act as pilgrim guides.

Kathabachaks. Those whose profession is to narrate the *pauranic* episodes are called *kathabachaks* or *vyasas*. There is no fixed place where one can find a *kathabachak* playing his trade but generally he organizes his *katha* (discourse) at the *ghat* or in a temple where people can easily be collected.

Keertanias. The professional singers of devotional songs called *keertanias* also organize their performances at the *ghats* or in temples.

Anushthanis. A *karmakandi* who performs certain course of recitation of *mantras* for the fulfilment of a desire of his client is called *anushthani*. Some people who have specialized in

this profession sit either on the banks of the Ganges or in some temples.

All the groups described above have overlapping functions, and one may find a person performing the roles of a temple priest, a *karmakandi*, an *anushthani*, a *keertania*, a *kathabachak*, or a *panda*, and only in exceptional case a *ghatia*. There are two reasons for this overlapping. Firstly, these are functional groups and not hereditary endogamous groups; and secondly, all those who are engaged in these occupations are Brahmans and hence equally entitled to perform all the rituals of Brahmanic complex. But all of them play a crucial role in the transmission of Brahmanic ritual tradition, no matter whether or not one is versed in the *shastric* knowledge. Even a less literate *ghatia* contributes to the perpetuation of this tradition as crucially as a learned *karmakandi*, as he directly interacts with the masses. In the perpetuation of this tradition lie the personal interests of all the groups, and hence each of them instils a considerable amount of religious fear and reverence in the minds of the common people. This is how the Hindu ritual tradition persists without the support of any temporal authority.

Ritual Associates

Besides those who are directly involved in the performance of rituals, there are several groups of people who are indirectly associated with the ritual complex. The entire professional group of pilgrim guides and pilgrim "hunters" (the *pandas*, their aides-de-camp *gumastas*, *bhaddaras*, and *yatrawals*) technically fall into the category of ritual associates, since their essential function, as stated earlier, is not to perform rituals but to assist pilgrims in various other ways. Only when they operate independently as the performers of rituals, we can place them into the category of ritual specialists, otherwise not.

There are groups which are not entitled to perform *shastric* rituals independently, and yet they are associated with the Brahmanic ritual complex. Such groups are generally not Brahmans by caste. The florists, the barbers, the boatmen, the musicians, and the Domas of Kashi fall under this category of ritual associates, for they have only a peripheral role in the

ritual complex. For instance, the florists supply flowers to the pilgrims; the barbers shave the pilgrims who want to perform certain rituals after shaving (shaving in itself is not a ritual); the boatmen help the pilgrims in offering *chunari* (cloth or garland) to the mother Ganges by taking them in their boat from one bank of the Ganges to another; the musicians play instruments while the rituals are being performed; and the Domas clean the cremation *ghat* and collect money for this purpose while making it obligatory to all the pilgrims to buy funeral firewood from them. In Kashi, the boatman sometimes persuades the pilgrims to perform a ritual on the eastern bank of the Ganges in which he plays the role of priest. Similarly, the Domas taking a clue from a *pauranic* story of Raja Harischandra claim to be the custodians of the sacred fire without which, they say, the deceased cannot attain *moksha*. The barber is so closely associated with a variety of Brahmanic ritual performances that he generally considers himself as a lieutenant of the priest. But none of these people can really be regarded as ritual specialists.

Artists and Craftsmen

Some of the traditional arts and crafts, such as classical music, ivory and brasswork, *kalabattu* and weaving, perfume-making and culinary art, for which Kashi has been famous, continue to prosper on account of the growing demand for them in the country. The classical music and dance have greatly benefited by the post-independence revival of these art forms in the country.¹

However, patronage similar to that extended to dancers and musicians has not been extended to several other artists and craftsmen, for instance, the painters and sculptors. The tradition of wall-painting was once popular in Kashi, and the potters were the traditional painters. Wall-paintings in modern buildings are out of fashion and the painters are no more in demand. The only occasion when they are in demand is at the time of marriage when certain images of gods and animals

¹Kashi is the home of many musicians and dancers of international repute. Bismillah Khan and Godaie Maharaja the musicians, and Sitara Bai and Gopi Krishna the dancers are the well-known among such artists.

have to be painted in the house of the bride. The ritualization of painting has however helped the artists to maintain their tradition, even without sufficient incentive. The sculptors of Kashi, some of them Gauda Brahmans, have similarly very little prospects of earning a living by their traditional craft. But curiously enough, some Gonds from Mirzapur who are settled in Kashi for several generations have also entered into this profitless profession. The lack of patronage has led to a slow decline of this art and today there is no sculptor in Kashi with sufficient knowledge of the *shilpashastra*.¹

Rajas and Dhanapatīs

It appears from historical records that Kashi never remained a capital of any king or dynasty for a long time like Hastinapur, Pataliputra, or Kannauja. It has all along been a pilgrim centre as well as a centre of trade and commerce. The popular belief is that this is the capital of Shiva and hence no one else can be the overlord of Kashi. In 1725, the Kashi *Raj* was established by Raja Cheta Singh, but soon he had to leave his palace at Shivala *ghat* and a fort was built in Ramnagar on the eastern bank of the Ganges. Since then the capital of Kashi *Raj* is located outside the sacred territory of Kashi, and thus Kashi remained more or less free from the temporal control of any king.

Nevertheless Kashi enjoyed the patronage of not only the king of Kashi but practically of all the Hindu kings and *rajas* of India as can be easily seen by a survey of the *ghats* from Assi to Varuna. All the important Hindu princely states of India are represented on these *ghats*. Of these, the important ones are: Banaras, Riwan, Panchkot, Mysore, Vijayanagaram, Digpatia, Udaipur, Indore, Jaipur, Bundi, Darbhanga, Gwalior, Baroda, and Nagpur. The king of Nepal is also represented. These kings built *ghats* and temples,

¹More than twenty years ago lived one Moslem sculptor, named Babu Miyana, who had the reputation of being the only person who could make *sriyantra* according to the canons of the *shilpashastra*. With his death the tradition of the *shilpashastra* in Kashi has come to an end.

massive monasteries, and palaces all along the banks of the Ganges. It is said that the shrines and *mathas* that exist today in Kashi would never have come up without the patronage and devotion of two illustrious princesses, Rani Ahilyabai of Indore and Rani Bhawani of Bengal. When the Kashi *Raj* was established, the Raja of Kashi did not interfere with the active interest shown by other Hindu princely states in the development of Kashi. In 1777, Rani Ahilyabai constructed the Vishwanath temple which is now the most popular of the Vishwanath temples in the city. In 1839, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh of Punjab gilded this temple. The *pandits* of Kashi and the artists and craftsmen were also patronized by the Hindu *rajās* from all over India.

The Kashi *Raj* played an important role in the promotion of Kashi's cultural tradition. Besides patronizing the existing cultural institutions, it introduced certain new elements in the cultural complex of Kashi. For instance, the *Ramaleela* celebrations of Ramanagar today play a vital role in the transmission of sacred tradition. In order to preserve the tradition of the *Vedas* the present Raja of Kashi, Dr Bibhuti Narain Singh, awards an honorarium for life to a scholar who has learnt the *Veda* in the traditional way; the sons of this scholar receive, after the death of the scholar, half the honorarium. Thus the award provides a minimum economic security to a *Vedic* scholar and his family. On the day the *Veda parayana* (recital) is concluded, at an investiture the scholar chosen for the award is worshipped and presented with silk garments and jewellery by the Raja. The Kashi Raj Trust has also undertaken to popularize the ancient Hindu scriptures through a bilingual journal, *Purana*.

The Raja of Kashi projects his image as the guardian of cultural tradition by leading an austere life according to the *shastric* injunctions. Today, while most *pandits* of Kashi send their children to English schools for modern education, the *yuvaraja* (the crown prince) of Kashi receives the *gurukul* training from the most celebrated *pandit* of the city. Though in the Republic of India the Raja of Kashi is no longer the ruler of this province, the people of this city continue to regard him as the *raja*—the guardian of their cultural tradition. He is considered to be the representative of Lord Vishwanath,

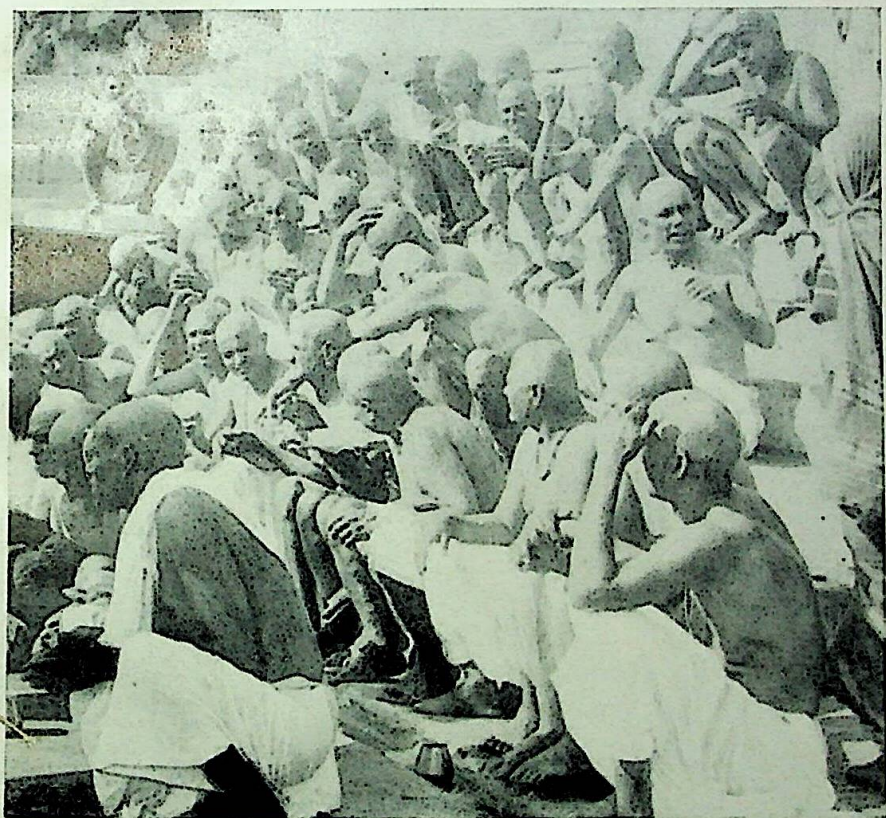
and hence greeted by the acclamation of *har-har-mahadeo*.¹

Kashi has received the patronage of wealthy merchants right from the days of the Buddha, and even today practically all the leading business houses of India support several charitable institutions of the city—*dharamshalas* (pilgrim rest houses), *annakshetras* (alms-houses), and *muktibhawans* (shelter houses)—for those who come from outside to spend their last days in Kashi. As a community of businessmen the Marwaris, the Agarwalas, and the Khatris are considered to be the promoters of *dharma*. But neither the big business houses nor the affluent donors enjoy the privileges of the Raja of Kashi as the guardians of cultural traditions.

¹Some of the informants interpreted this form of greeting differently. They held that in the city of Vishwanath no one but the *Mahadeo* (the other name of Vishwanath) can be hailed publicly, and hence this acclamation *har-har-mahadeo*. Now-a-days, even important leaders, such as the President and the Prime Minister of India, visiting Kashi are hailed by this traditional form of greeting. This makes the position of the Raja of Kashi different from the Raja of Puri, who is called *chalantu* Vishnu or the mobile Vishnu.



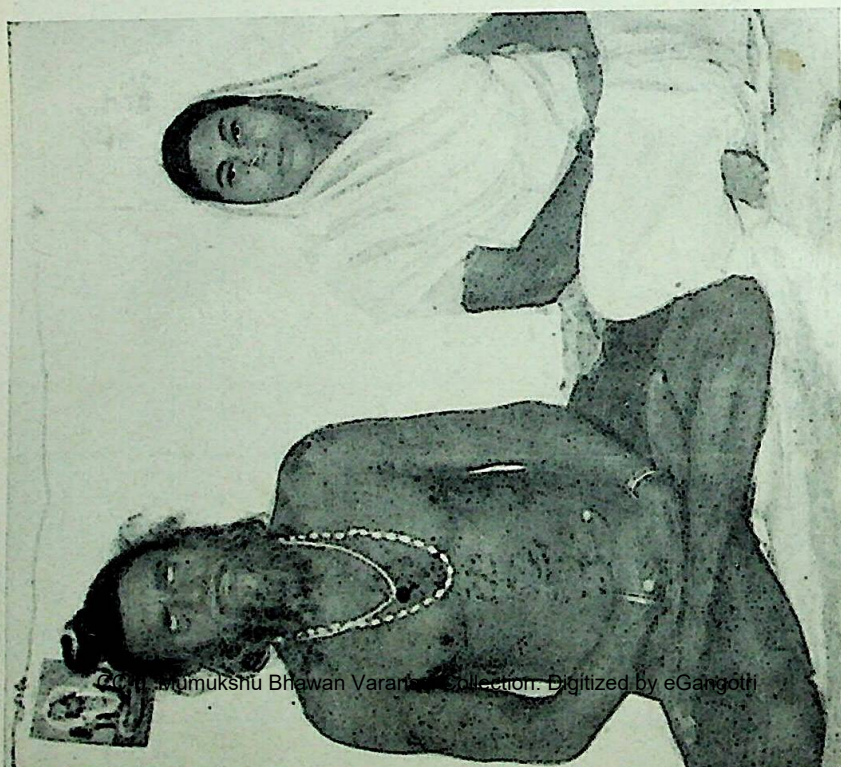
The GHATS on the Ganges during Shivaratri



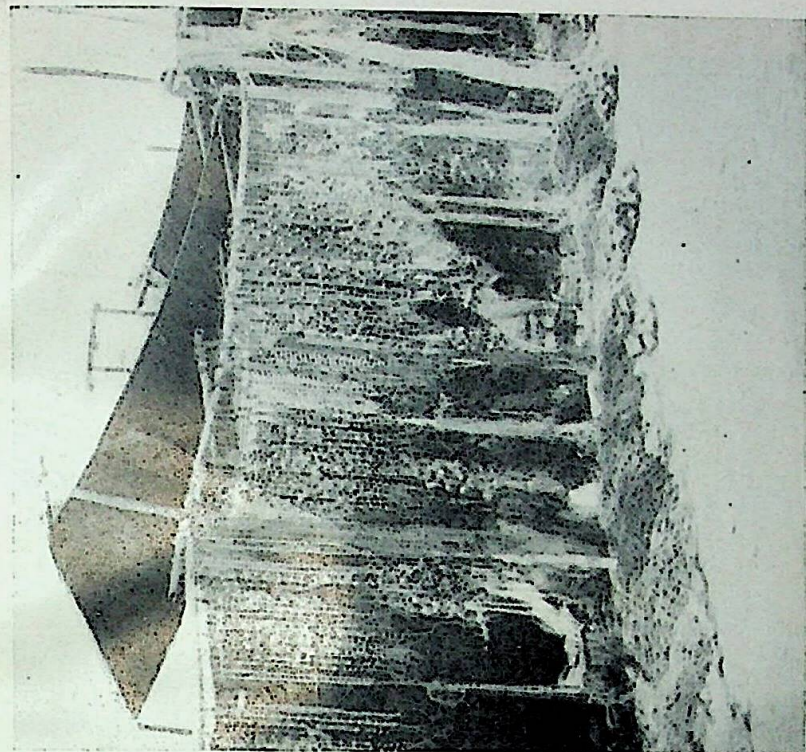
CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri
Mass PINDADAN rites at the Manikarnika Ghat



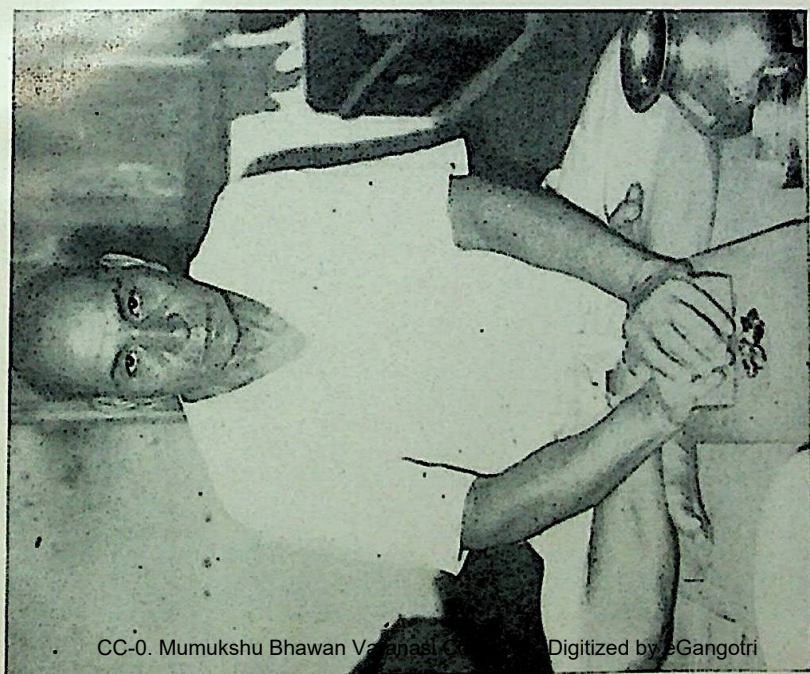
A DANDI Sanyasi bathing in the Ganges



The naked AWADHOTA in Yogic Sadhana along with his wife



Stalls selling RUDRAKSHA beads and other trinkets

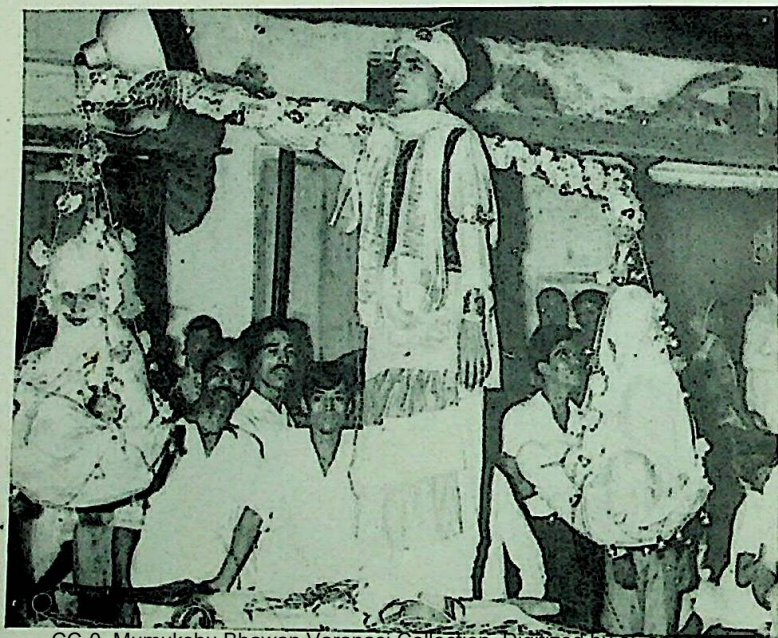


A BANARASI preparing Bhanga



RAMLEELA: *Hanuman
prays to Rama and Seeta*

RAMLEELA :
*Sravankumar
carrying his parents
on pilgrimage*



Chapter Three

Varieties of Sacred Traditions

Tradition holds that Kashi houses thirty-three *koti*¹ shrines and half a million images. It is also held that all the seven *puris* and four *dhamas*—the important places of Hindu pilgrimage in India—are enshrined in Kashi, and the principal deities of these places reside here in their best form. For, out of the sixteen *kalas* (the degrees of attributes) they display in Kashi fifteen *kalas*, while in their respective homes they retain only one *kala*.

Kashi has a heterogenous population and it shelters practically all the major religions of India. However, Hindus (about 73 per cent) and Moslems (about 23 per cent) are the major religious groups represented. The followers of different faiths have built their shrines and this has given Kashi a heterogenous character. Even if we consider only the Brahmanic shrines, for the present purpose, the heterogeneity in Kashi's sacred traditions stands out clearly. The belief regarding thirty-three *koti* shrines dedicated to different gods and goddesses implies heterogeneity not only in sacred objects but also in sacred performances and the composition of pilgrims visiting Kashi.

Varieties of Shrines

In the 5th century, Fa-Hien noted thirty Buddhist monasteries and about one hundred Hindu temples in Kashi. In the 13th century, Ala-Uddin demolished one thousand Hindu temples, and in 1494 another one thousand temples were destroyed by Sikandar Lodi. Of these about one thousand temples were

¹In popular usage *koti* means a hundred lacs, but in the author's opinion here it refers to thirty-three kinds of gods and *not* thirty-three crores.

renovated by Raja Man Singh of Ajmer in the year 1600. In the 17th century, Shahjahan demolished seventy-six Hindu temples in Kashi. In 1830, Princep estimated that there were one thousand temples and three hundred thirty-three mosques in the city. In 1875, Lazarus noted that there were one thousand four hundred seventy *shivalas* and two hundred eighty mosques in the main city of Banaras, but if those in the jurisdiction of Sikraul are included the numbers increase to one thousand five hundred fifty of the former and three hundred of the latter. In 1885, Sir William Hunter, following a systematic survey of Banaras, recorded one thousand four hundred fifty-four temples and two hundred seventy-two mosques located in the seven wards of the city.

But more than their numbers what is significant about these temples is the variety of deities they are dedicated to. It has been noted earlier that all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon are enshrined in this holy city. The names of these deities cannot possibly be listed, but should we consider only the main families of gods, mentioned in the *Skanda Purana*, the number of temples dedicated to the main families will be as in Table 4.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXISTING SHRINES ACCORDING TO THEIR PRINCIPAL DEITIES, AS MENTIONED IN THE SKANDA PURANA

<i>Deity</i>	<i>Number of temples dedicated to the deity</i>
Shiva	151
Mangala Gauri	45
Lakshmi-Saraswati	4
Vaishnava deities	72
Bhairao	13
Vinayaka	32
Aditya	13
Total	330

In India, today there are only a few temples housing the sun god, the god saturn, and the Brahma. Kashi is one of the few places where these gods are enshrined and regularly worshipped.

Besides these temples for gods of textual cultural traditions, there are shrines for various *birs* and *satis* who seem to be in existence even much before the Brahmanic gods came into prominence. The *birs* are the male deities of the Ahirs, Manjhis, Bharabhuja, and Domas who are the indigeneous people of Kashi. Of these *birs*, the most important ones are Lahurabir, Agiyabir, Dairabir, and Deoriabir. The female deities of this category, the *satis*, are Khokhimata, Chhatapatimata, and several others. According to a popular belief each *sati* can cure specific diseases. For instance, Khokhimata cures cough and cold and Chhatapatimata is worshipped to bring down the temperature if one is suffering from fever. It appears that many *bodhisattvas* of the Mahayana Buddhism who were once worshipped by the autochthones of this place assumed the form of *birs* when Brahmanism became the dominant religion of Kashi. But this can be substantiated only after a careful study of these shrines and the Buddhist texts.

Varieties of Sacred Performances

The textually prescribed rituals differ widely depending on the orders of gods and goddesses. In Kashi, both the *Vedic* and the *tantric paddhati* (methods) of worship are followed in different shrines, as also in the same shrine depending upon the devotees and the situation. This is an important cultural phenomenon which needs to be illustrated for the sake of clarification.

So far as the textual prescriptions of rituals are concerned while in the orthodox temples the deity is worshipped by *sodasopachar paddhati*, in some less orthodox temples only *panchopachar* method of worship is followed, and still in some other temples the deity is worshipped only perfunctorily. The scriptures have prescribed various kinds of offerings to be made to different gods. The Vaishnava, the Shakta, and the Shaiva deities have to be treated differently not only in the method of worship but also in the nature of offerings. An offering which is favourite to one god is a taboo for another. For example, vermilion is an essential object of offering for the gods of the Shakti cult, but it cannot be offered to Vishnu or Shiva. In the temple of Vishwanath two opposing traditions sometimes

combine and notable exceptions are made. The *jyotirlingam* of Vishwanath is offered vermillion with the justification that in it combine both *Purush* and *Prakriti*, Shiva and Parvati. There is another notable exception: The *tulsi* leaf is favourite to Vishnu and *belapatra* to Shiva, and the thing which is a must for the one is a taboo for the other. But on the day of the *vaikuntha chaturdasi*, Vishwanath is offered *tulsi* and Vishnu offered *belapatra*.

The method of worship as well as the nature of offerings may vary according to the cultural and economic background of the worshipper: The South Indian pilgrims invariably perform *kum-kum archana* in the Annapoorna temple, whereas pilgrims from other parts of India do not observe this ritual. The pilgrims from Nepal have a ritual in which pigeons are brought to the temple precinct and set free in the name of the worshipper. The South Indian pilgrims offer coconut and boiled rice to Shitala; the Bengali pilgrims offer this deity only boiled rice; and the local devotees offer *hahva* and *puri*. While the poor pilgrims offer a terracotta goat to the deity Shitala, the affluent ones offer a silver goat.

Animal sacrifice was never encouraged in Kashi, and even today almost all the Brahmanic Shakta deities are worshipped without sacrificing goats. But when the Bengali population of the city increased and they began to hold key positions in the intellectual life of Kashi they introduced their custom of animal sacrifice in the Durga temple without any opposition. The local Brahmans as also the Brahmans from South India and Maharashtra, who are strict vegetarians, took it as an approved form of worship. In the shrines of *birs*, the most favourite offering is spirituous liquor and hence, if at all a Brahman devotee goes to this deity he has to make this offering which is taboo to the gods he normally worships.

Unequal Participation in Sacred Complex

All the pilgrims visiting Kashi do not participate in its sacred complex equally.¹ The extent of participation of a pilgrim in

¹Baidyanath Saraswati; 1972, "Sacred Complexes in Indian Cultural Traditions" *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of a Complex Society*, Binod Chand Agarwal, (ed.) Indian Academy of Social Sciences, New Delhi.

the sacred complex depends on his cultural knowledge of the place he is visiting and also on the textual prescriptions regarding the rituals one ought to perform there. In a place like Kashi where over one thousand temples are located it is almost impossible for anyone to visit all the sacred shrines. The complexity of rituals to be performed in Kashi is equally alarming, and no one can afford to observe all the prescribed rituals at the countless shrines in the city. And thus it is no wonder that no pilgrim fully participates in the total sacred complex of Kashi.

It has been indicated earlier that the pilgrims coming from different cultural regions of India observe different sacred traditions so far as the rituals are concerned. In the same manner, the pilgrims belonging to different cultural traditions share the sacred complex of Kashi differently. As explained elsewhere,¹ according to the modes of transmission of knowledge there are three types of cultural traditions in India: (1) Oral (*laukic*), (2) textual (*shastric* or *shastriya*), and (3) transcendental (*para-sanskriti*). In the following pages, the pilgrims belonging to these traditions are examined in the context of their ideal participation in the sacred complex of Kashi.

Oral Cultural Tradition

During a pilgrimage to Kashi, a potter pilgrim, belonging to the oral cultural tradition, feels contented if he has visited the main Vishwanath temple. His Brahman guide (*panda*) may, however, take him to some other temples, but that does not form an essential part of his pilgrimage. What is important for him is to have a *darshana* of Vishwanath and a bath in the Ganges whereby all his sins are blotted out. But on his own he will not forget to visit the shrines of Agiyabir and Lahurabir and will also bathe in the Krimikunda—a sacred tank located in Keenaram-ka-astar. This visit is meant for his general well-being, or to cure himself of any chronic disease he may be suffering from, and to have offspring. He will also visit Aughar-ki-takiya so as to be blessed by the Aughar Baba and to drink the sacred water from the well which can “heal” various kinds

¹Baidyanath Saraswati ; 1970, *Contributions to the Understanding of Indian Civilizations*, Karanatak University, Dharwar.

of diseases. He will perform *pindadan* ritual at the *ghats* under the direction of a Brahman priest. Sometimes he may not himself perform any ritual in the temple but will bring flowers, sweets, incense, and such other objects that the priest may demand from him for offering the deity on his behalf. He is traditionally entitled only for a *darshana* of the Brahmanic deity, but when he visits Agiyabir, he himself offers wine and *ganja*, and sacrifices a fowl or a goat. There, if he wants, he may take the help of a non-Brahman priest of the shrine, but he can very well do even without the priest.

Thus, his participation in the Brahmanic sacred complex in Kashi is minimal and peripheral. Where he interacts more freely and closely are the places which have no scriptural sanction and which lie outside the sacred geography of the Brahmanic Kashi.

Textual Cultural Tradition

When a Brahman pilgrim visits Kashi he tries to cover as many Brahmanic shrines as he possibly can within the limits of his time and means. Besides the main Vishwanath temple, which is the most important shrine, he visits, at least, one shrine of each of the important groups of gods and goddesses mentioned in the *Skanda Purana*: Shiva, Mangala Gauri, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Vishnu, Vinayaka, Bhairao, and Aditya. If he is unable to bathe in all the sacred wells, tanks, and bathing *ghats* on the Ganges, called *tirthas*, he will bathe, at least, in Manikarnika *ghat*. In that case his pilgrimage will be called *ekatirthis yatra*. If he bathes in Manikarnika, Dasashwamedha, and Pancha Ganga *ghats*, he will be performing the *tritirthis yatra*, but by adding Assi Sangam and Varuna Sangam *ghats* in his pilgrimage he will be performing the *panchatirthis yatra*. Similarly, if he cannot walk the *panchakosi* route, he takes a shorter route of the *antargrihi parikrama*. The minimum rituals which he performs during his pilgrimage to Kashi are—Ganga *pujan*, *pitrisradha*, and *abhisheka* of Vishwanath. If he knows the *mantras* and the ritual methods he may not employ any priest. However, for certain kinds of rituals, particularly those wherein gifts are to be made, he has to take the help of a Brahman priest specialized in ritual craft.

It is undeniable that all the Brahman pilgrims visiting Kashi do not perform even these minimum rituals of pilgrimage. Here the point of interest is that the Brahman's minimum participation in the pilgrimage is much greater than the ideal requirements of the potter pilgrim. There is another important difference. Unlike the potter, the Brahman pilgrim will not visit the shrine of Agiyabir nor will he bathe in the Krimikunda. The potter is the master of his own rituals in the shrines of the *birs* and *satis*. A Brahman possesses similar rights in all the Brahmanic shrines. In case he is illiterate he will employ a priest and even repeat *mantras* without understanding their meaning, but in either case he will be performing rituals according to the scriptural texts. The potter, on the other hand, follows no text while performing his own rituals at the shrines of the *birs*. Even while performing *pindadana* ritual, under the instruction of a Brahman priest, the potter pronounces only the names of his ancestors to whom the *pindas* are to be offered. He might, however, utter some vernacular words, as the priest may ask him to do, but seldom the original Sanskrit text.

Thus, it is obvious that the potter and the Brahman pilgrims do not participate in the sacred complex of Kashi equally.

Transcendental Cultural Tradition

A Dandi *sanyasi* visiting Kashi may or may not perform any ritual. He may bathe in the Ganges, but not necessarily with a view to wiping out his sins. Also he may or may not visit any temple. Indeed, ideally, he is not expected to perform any textually prescribed rituals which the householders are required to do. Since he belongs to the Advaita school, he is not supposed to believe in gods and goddesses, and hence his visit to a temple is not only unnecessary but also inconsistent with his spiritual ideals. At the time of taking *sanyas* he had performed the *sraddha* ceremony for his ancestors as well as his own funeral rite which symbolizes his "death" as an individual in this world. Therefore, he is no longer required to be guided by "this worldly" laws. His visit to a place of pilgrimage may be casual or motivated by personal reasons, or may be that he is just visiting the places. To him, ideally, there is no distinction between what people call "sacred" and "profane".

In practice, however, most Dandi *sanyasis* visit temples and perform *abhisheka* to the *panchadeo*. But an orthodox Dandi is satisfied only with the worship of his *danda* (sacred staff). When he passes through a temple he may only touch the temple-gate or even the idol with his sacred staff, and may move away without performing any *abhisheka*. He may visit the shrine of Aughar-ki-takiya and Keenaram-ka-astar, and if he is engaged in a *sadhana* he may also stay on the Manikarnika cremation *ghat*. As a matter of fact, his behaviour is much dependent on the level of his personal achievement in transcendental *sadhana*. If he is a "realized" person he will not bother with what is sacred and what is profane, what is *shastric* and what is *laukic*. But, if he has just dressed himself in an ochre robe to roam about with a *danda* without understanding his goal he may behave like an orthodox Brahman.

Thus, what is significant about the Dandi's visit to Kashi is that ideally his participation in the pilgrimage, in the sense of ritual performances, is practically nil.

Chapter Four

Sacred Secular Continuum

From the earlier descriptions of the varieties of sacred traditions it is obvious that the nature of sacred in Hindu cultural tradition is not as simple as one finds it in Semitic culture. In both Christianity and Islam the descent of man on the earth is itself a proof of his sin and the expiation of this sin is his ultimate goal, and he must regain the sacred, the paradise of the god, which he has lost. Therefore, secular is synonymous with profane, and the logical anti-thesis of the sacred. But in Brahmanic sacred tradition man is not a despised being; he is not inherently subservient to god. The examples of the Vedic *rishis* and the Brahmanic ritual craft indicate that by means of *tapas* man has been creating sacred and by means of rituals he has been reversing the course of sacred—the will of gods—thus lending support to the argument that man is not subservient to god. In other words, man has been trying to overrule the will of god. This aspect of Brahmanic Hinduism makes it uniquely different from all other religions of the world. It is only in the later phase of the development of this religion, the phase of the *bhakti* cults, that our vision was clouded and we began to treat man as the *dasa* (servant) of god, a typical Sufi attitude.

A person who dies in Kashi attains *moksha*—cessation from life and death. In Brahmanic Hinduism paradise or *swarga* is the lesser form of attainment, *moksha* is the ultimate goal. The entire Kashi-*kshetra* is sacred where thirty-three *koti* gods and goddesses reside with pride and admiration. When Divodas ousted Shiva from Kashi for a brief period, the god of the three “worlds” felt immensely miserable and the entire corps of the *devaloka* tried to help Shiva regain his favourite

place, but whosoever was sent to Kashi to vanquish Divodas became so much enamoured of the beauty of this place and the administration of this earthly being Divodas that nobody left Kashi thereafter—so says the *Skanda Purana*. The terrestrial life has been praised in the early Brahmanic scriptures and the system of pilgrimage has been introduced to enable one to see the beauty of nature all around. It is not for nothing that places of Hindu pilgrimage are located in blissful natural surroundings—the Himalaya, the river fords, the jungles, and hillocks. Man moves in these places the way he likes—like a potter, or a Brahman, or a Dandi *sanyasi*—and organizes the sacred in the way that suites him. Sacred is not something external to him, he uses it in the cultivation of excellence and, indeed, in all fields of his creative life. This intrinsic relationship between sacred and secular is truly reflected in Kashi's cultural complex—in its settlement pattern, sacred performances, and the professions involved in the sacred complex.

Settlement Pattern

The total area of the city of Kashi is 28.5 square miles. It is one of the most crowded cities of India with an average population density of about 20,500 per square mile. In 1961 the total population of the city was 4,71,248; in 1971 it was over five lacs (5,83,856). The city is divided into two distinct *mahals* (portions), locally known as *pucca mahal* and *kachcha mahal*. The *pucca mahal* is the old quarter of the city—a perfect labyrinth of lofty buildings separated from one another by the narrow stone-paved alleys. The *kachcha mahal* consists of the interior and lower areas of the city.

Although, as stated earlier, the area of Kashi-*kshetra* mentioned in sacred texts is much larger than the existing municipal limits of the city; at the contextual level the city is broadly divided into two large areas. The road which connects the Banaras Hindu University and the Rajghat bridge—through Godolia, Chauk, Maidagin, Vishesharaganj, and Machchodari—divides the city into two unequal regions. The area between this road and the Ganges forms the heart of Kashi's cultural complex. In this area are located practically all the important shrines of Kashi. Here also are concentrated the *mathas*, the Sanskrit

pathashalas, the houses of *pandits* and practising ritual specialists, and varieties of religious institutions. The cultural importance of this place is well-established in tradition; as the saying goes *Kashi base to kya base, base Aurangabad* (What is the good of living in Kashi if you live in Aurangabad—a *mohalla* which lies beyond this territory). This is also the area which shelters a large proportion of the population of the city, both Hindus and Moslems. It is decidedly the main business area in Kashi: Vishwanath *gali* which leads to the main temple is the shopping centre for fancy goods; Visheshganganj, named after the original shrine of Visheshwara, that exists today in the name of Adivisheshwara, is the principal *mandi* (wholesale grain trading centre) of Kashi; and not far from Manikarnika and Sankatha *ghats*, in the narrow *chakravyuha galis* around Chauk, is the main wholesale market for Banarasi silks and *sarees*. It covers the total area of *pucca mahal* and reflects the cultural life of Kashi - arts, crafts, commerce, literature, sacred-secular, *gundas*, *thugs*, and everything. In this area are concentrated people from all parts of India in linguistic and regional pockets: Kannada, Tamil, Bengali, Maithila, Nepali, Gujarati, Marathi, and several other linguistic groups. The importance of this area lies not merely in the performance of rituals but in all aspects of Kashi's cultural life. If this area is taken out from the map of Kashi there remains nothing of Kashi. In the circumstances, it is impossible to mark a clear-cut boundary between sacred and secular on the physical map of Kashi. The two are linked up with one another so inseparably that even the most veteran geographer may fail to decide where to begin and where to end drawing the boundaries of sacred and secular.

Sacred Performances

No Hindu god has the exclusive right of worship for the attainment of *moksha*. All gods are worshipped for the fulfilment of human desires. The human desires are of three classes: (1) *artha*, (2) *kama*, and (3) *moksha*. Since the desire for *moksha* is conditioned by the desire for emancipation from other desires, the sacred has to operate logically into the desires for *artha* and *kama*. The Hindu gods have been assigned

accordingly various functions to fulfil human desires. In other words, there is specialization among gods: certain gods are the givers of wealth; others cure particular ailments and sufferings; and still some others promote skills and scholarship. But in some of the Brahmanic gods and goddesses all these functions may also combine, and therefore, people worship the same god for the fulfilment of various desires. The *jyotirlinga* at Deoghar is called *manokamana linga*—the phallus of Shiva which fulfils earthly human desires. But the *jyotirlinga* at Kashi has not been put to such limitation, he is the bestower of *moksha* and the one who takes shelter in his favourite city gets all worldly pleasure and no pain. Therefore, the god Vishwanath combines in himself both what may be called sacred and secular.

Besides Vishwanath, there are innumerable gods, both Brahmanic and non-Brahmanic, to fulfil various desires of man. The "specialization" of these gods, in some cases has been very precise. Khokhimata, for instance, cures cough and cold; Chhatapatimata gives relief to a person suffering from fever; Shitala is the well-known goddess of small-pox; Sankathaji gives offspring and redresses all worldly obstacles (*sankata*); and so also the Sankatamochan Hanuman.

Certain types of sacred performances are consciously conducted with earthly considerations. Man's final desire of enjoying beauty and his sense of aesthetics are amply fulfilled in his sacred performances. This is truly reflected in the selection of sacred objects or motifs, in the style of performances, in the choice of place, the choice of time and season, and such other considerations which make a ritual pleasing and absorbing. If one carefully examines this he will find that no Hindu ritual is devoid of such aesthetic values. In Kashi, a ritual bath in the Ganges, is not only a matter of gaining religious merit but also an occasion of going through an exciting experience in life. The lovely *ghats* of Kashi dotted with palm-leaf umbrellas and glittering in the sun light; the twinkling music of temple bells; bathing scene of the belles adorned in multi-coloured garments; cool breeze; a pleasing bath in the sacred stream flowing majestically; and wearing sandal-wood paste and the wreaths of fresh-blown roses with sweet fragrance afford a sense of joy which only a bather who has experienced this

can describe best. Similarly, when one visits the Vishwanath temple at the time of *arati* he is completely lost in the beautiful surroundings: *shringar* (decoration) of the deity; decorations of light; the ethereal aroma of flowers, incenses and sandal-wood paste; the melody of prayer; and the splendour of music—all that may lead one to experience the overwhelming pleasure and supreme bliss. All ritual performances are made with a sense of perfect aesthetics held with deep devotion.

Indeed, no ritual of whatsoever merit can persist for a long time without lending a sensual pleasure to the performer, and no religion can draw people simply on abstract philosophy unattended with human emotions involved in the exquisite beauty of Nature.

Sacred—An Industry

It is a common knowledge that in India a sacred complex is a great industry. Most Indian cities of ancient origin grew from a small shrine. Kashi has developed as a sacred city in the same manner. About three-fourth of Kashi's population is dependent upon the pilgrim "industry". Several thousands of people are employed in sacerdotal occupations of various kinds.

But what is more revealing about the sacred complex is that those who are professionally involved in it consider sacred as a mere means of livelihood and not something to be treated in a special manner. This attitude towards sacred is discerned by any conscious observer visiting a temple or observing a priest conducting rituals. This is so conspicuous in their behaviour that everyone knows what they are after. Even a devout pilgrim has to haggle with them, and sometimes he may even be subjected to intense annoyance at the time of performing a ritual. But then he reconciles by saying that it is their *vritti* (occupation) and hence their aim is to extract as much money as they possibly can in the manner of a fishmonger. That they have complete disregard for the sacred evidently comes out when one notices them indulging in acts that are prohibited for a devout Hindu. Smoking, spitting, drinking tea, eating food, speaking abusive language, and carnal desires in a shrine are tabooed for the pilgrims, but those who conduct

rituals hardly follow the rules. Exceptions are hard to find to this general tenor in most shrines of Kashi.

The shrines are personal properties of individuals; these can be transacted in the manner of immoveable property. A shrine may be owned individually as well as collectively. In most of the shrines there is *pari* (turn) system whereby the revenue of the temple is shared by turn. The *pari* can be bought and sold and can also be mortgaged to anyone—to a Brahman or Ahir, to a Hindu or Moslem. The collection of the cash gifts and offerings from a temple is called *galla*, a term which the merchants use for their day's earnings. All these are undeniable facts and both the devotees and the professionals in sacred crafts are aware of them. Indeed, it is hard to make a distinction between sacred and secular so far as the style of earning, the attitude towards earning, and the professional ethics are concerned.

Sacred in Tune with Secular

From the preceding discussion it becomes obvious that sacred is more or less used as a tool in the various spheres of man's creativity, and in achieving this earthly goal a Hindu seems to have no reservations whatsoever. The Hindu sculptors and architects and also artists and poets allowed their creative genius to flow freely and fearlessly without giving any allowance to sacred, or else they would not have built the magnificent temples of Konarak and Khajuraho; and Kalidas, Jayadeva, and Vidyapati would not have composed the immortal songs of love and beauty.

The moment it is realised that a particular form of sacred has failed to meet the secular needs of man it is discarded forthwith. There are numerous examples of the shrines being abandoned for very mundane reasons. If any part of an idol is broken by accident, according to *shastric* tradition, it is no more sacred and hence thrown out in a river. Also, if the god encroaches on the secular needs of man, the god must quit the place at once. When the population of Kashi increased and people wanted more space for houses and shops a number of shrines had to be abandoned and the sacred idols were ruthlessly destroyed and consigned to the eternal floods of the Ganges,

not by the non-believers but by those who worship them everyday.

In the circumstances, in Indian cultural traditions one fails to put "sacred" and "secular" into two water-tight compartments. In the drudgery of social life one may find certain diacritical marks artificially dividing people into high and low, but as one comes to a place like Kashi, this difference begins to evaporate. A Brahman—the tallest in the society—comes to Manikarnika cremation *ghat* and asks for sacred fire from its custodian, the untouchable Doma, for without this sacred fire his deceased kinsman cannot attain *moksha*—the supreme sacred. From such examples, how can one really dichotomize "sacred" and "secular" or "sacred" and "profane"? Indeed, they are the two sides of the same coin, the difference lies in the perception of the man depending from what angle he looks at it.

Chapter Five

Self-identifiable Culture

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to give an outsider's presentation of Kashi's cultural traditions. Such attempts have been made by several culture historians, but the majority of them could copiously depict only a fragment of Kashi's classical culture-complex. As an anthropologist when the author tried to locate this classical culture of Kashi in concrete observable contexts, it appeared that Kashi's "idealized culture" is the backwaters of its "reality culture". In order to clarify the understanding of the total gestalt of this complex city a seminar of the local cultural specialists was organized in 1973.¹ In this new exploration Kashi emerged as something different from what the historians of culture have so far depicted. Though no clearcut-formulae could be presented by the convention, it became sufficiently clear that Kashi is a complex city, a city of contrasts, and a city of heterogeneous elements.

¹The seminar on "Social and Cultural Profile of Kashi" was organized under the auspices of *Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose Memorial Foundation* from January 22 to 25, 1973. Nearly sixty contributors from various castes, religious, and linguistic groups—both literate and non-literate—participated in the deliberation. The non-literate participants presented their views orally. The object was to find out how in Kashi people of various cross-sections define their culture.

See Baidyanath Saraswati ; 1973, "A Resume on the Seminar on Social and Cultural Profile of Kashi", *Man in India*, Vol. 53, No. 1.

See also Baidyanath Saraswati : "Seminar-ka-Parichaya" and "Sampan Vaktavya" in *Kashi ke Samajik aur Sanskritica Jeevan ki Jhanki* (in Hindi) (in press) edited by Satya Prakash Mittal, *Bose Memorial Foundation Varanasi*.

Kashi : A City of Bhoga and Moksha

Kashi has all along been the city of *moksha* and *bhoga*, that is to say, it has given almost equal emphasis to the "spiritual" and "material" developments in man and society. As a city of *moksha*, Kashi has been amply idealized by various scholars, but in the "self-identifiable mass culture" of Kashi, *moksha* is indeed not the dominant theme.

The people of Kashi commonly share among themselves a much wider experience of life that overrides caste, class, and sectarian boundaries. A *pandit* and a *sanyasi* of Kashi may be proud of Kashi's Sanskritic cultural heritage, and a devout Hindu may be proud of the *jyotirlinga* of Vishwanath, but this is not all that Kashi possesses. Even a *pandit* or a *sanyasi* knows that things which make the totality of his life are more than Sanskrit texts, more than the cult of Vishwanath. What a *pandit* shares with a milkman, a florist, a barber, a washerman, a grain-merchant, a *tonga* driver, a *pahalwan*, a *bhang*-seller, a musician, and all those with whom he interacts daily in his city is his "reality culture". And what the people of Kashi, regardless of their being Hindus or Moslems, Brahmans or Jains, Vaishyas or Shudras, commonly recognize as their shared tradition is what might be called the "reality culutre" of Kashi.

In their "self-identification" as a cultural group or as a community, the people of Kashi address themselves by the term *banarsi*. The terms, such as *masti*, *phakkarpan*, and even *akhkharpan*, which give cultural expressions to *banarsi* have no substitutes in any language, suffice it to say that these denote certain cultural characteristics whereby the people of this city are "self-recognizable". A person belonging to the *banarsi* culture has a distinct style of life identifiable by his dress, food, drink, speech, manners, sense of humour, and habits. A *banarsi* is aware of his unique style of life and when he goes out of his city he finds in the new surroundings certain forms of expressions of his life missing. What is missing there is the *banarsi*-ness which his city alone can provide. His self-conscious "oneness" that he commonly displays in his interaction with others arises out of this consideration and hence *banarsi* is his 'reality culture'.

Thus, it comes out that what is dominant in the "reality culture" of Kashi is the *bhoga* which characterizes material

culture and the way of life of a *banarsi*. Nevertheless, it is true that such attributes of *banarsi* as *masti*, *phakkarpan*, and *akhiikharpan* are more often assigned to Shiva, the god of bliss, and that the city of Kashi is allegorically known as *mahashmashan* (the great cremation ground)—the play ground of Shiva, the god of destruction. In brief, the people of Kashi trace their spiritual descent from Shiva, the presiding deity of this city. Hence, some kind of religious symbolism does prevail upon the "reality culture" of Kashi, but its application is limited.

Kashi : A City of Cultural Pluralism

Another important aspect of this city is that the various linguistic groups of Kashi, such as Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Bengali, and Maithila have preserved the pristine purity of their respective cultural traditions while staying away from their native places for no less than five centuries. And yet, they are so much a part of Kashi's culture that the history of Kashi's classical culture is the history of Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Bengali, and Maithila *pandits* in Kashi. The cultural mixing of Kashi has been so perfect and thorough that it is difficult to find out a dominant core. If one ventures to find out the core even in its classical culture he will, of course, be treading an impossible path. In the cultural pluralism of Calcutta, for instance, Bengali is the dominant core. But the Saryuparis who claim to be the autochthones of Kashi, cannot be treated on the same count as a dominant core in the cultural pluralism of Kashi. Neither the Marathi, nor the Gujarati, and not even the Bengali can claim to have formed the core of Kashi's culture. But whether one is a Gujarati or a Tamil, a Sikh or a Moslem, a Brahman or an Ahir, he is first a *banarsi* and then a Gujarati, a Tamil, a Sikh, a Moslem, a Brahman, and an Ahir. This *banarsi*-ness, as has already been stated, refers to a distinct style of life which cannot be ascribed to any single linguistic group, caste, or class. *Banarsi*-ness is the overall flavour of this city of great antiquity and cultural heterogeneity.

Kashi : A City of Affluence and Grinding Poverty

As a city of affluence Kashi presents several peculiarities many of which have no rational explanations. The people of Kashi

V25213CN7
L5

dismiss all the oddities in their behaviour as part of the *banarsi*-ness. For instance, the *raees*, as a member of a class of aristocrats, is known for his cynicism¹ and vulgar behaviour. A *raees* will deliberately spit on a passers-by from the balcony of his house and then he will ask forgiveness with all humility and offer new clothes to the victim. He obviously enjoys such practical "jokes" and takes pride in his peculiar sense of humour. In the early days of his youth a *raees* of Kashi is sent by his parents to prostitutes to learn the etiquette; as a young man he is sometimes ranked with the *gundas* of the city; but in his old age he is known for his fine taste in art, music, and literature. The social image of the *gundas* of Kashi is colourful. Certain great Hindi poets of Kashi have composed and continue to compose poems in brothels; the *pandits* have been in dialogue with the prostitutes. Prostitution is no social evil for the people of Kashi, it is an art of life. Examples are cited of the prostitutes being the custodians of music and fine arts. This kind of glorification of the oddities has made the people of Kashi totally insensitive of social evils and sufferings. The city is conspicuous by its hoard of widows, beggars, and destitutes, but no one seems to be bothered with this problem, for this is the city of Annapoorna—the goddess of food—where no one shall die of hunger. With the bulls and monkeys around, Kashi, according to its citizens, is a pastoral city, where no one is concerned with all the filth and dirt dumped in the narrow lanes.

If poverty is a problem not to be bothered about, wealth or affluence must also be treated with lesser attachment. A *raees* commands social respect not because he is wealthy, but mainly on considerations of his pedigree, his taste, and his behaviour. A *raees* is distinguished from a wealthy prosperous businessman as long as the former does not hanker after wealth. There is a definite pattern of consumption of wealth, style of leisurely life, and hobbies which mark him off from the other affluents—the business community or the *nouveau riche*. He will not be a member of a Rotary Club, but he would like to attend academic assemblies or music conferences, even in indifferent health. In brief, *raeesi* is a culture trait which is

¹One such *raees* of Kashi who is often remembered was Jjhakkara Sahu.

transmitted from one generation to the next. And hence, one does not become *raees* by mere accumulation of wealth, it takes generations for a wealthy person to be called a *raees*.

But neither a *raees* nor a wealthy businessman can attain the highest social status in Kashi. In the traditional social context, the Raja of Kashi is supreme. He is the symbol of Kashi's cultural traditions, the representative of Vishwanath, the presiding deity.

Two Religions and Three Cultures

It has already been noted that the orthodox Brahmanism prevails upon the Hindu classical cultural tradition in Kashi. The same law of orthodoxy operates among the Moslem population of the city whose *ulama*, *maulavis*, and *faqeeers* are the counterparts of Hindu *pandits*, priests, and ascetics. Like their Hindu brethren Moslems also have retained the pristine purity of their classical culture. And, therefore, there are two distinct streams of Hindu and Moslem cultures, each having its own crops of cultural specialists and a set of cultural symbols, but in either case religion consistently operates as a cultural axis.

In Kashi, there is another undercurrent of culture, the "self-identifiable" culture of Kashi known as the *banarsi* culture. In it the organization of order and process of life is uniquely different from both Hindu and Moslem classical cultures. One might say that in *banarsi* culture Hindu elements are quantitatively large, but so far as its cultural focus is concerned it is qualitatively different from both Hindu and Moslem cultural streams. For, *banarsi* culture is free from the ubiquitous "other worldly" elements, and it emphasizes on the cultivation of excellence in "this worldly" life. It is because of its disregard for the diacritical marks of religion that it can accommodate a much wider varieties of people who are otherwise separated from one another by religion, caste, language, or region. And, therefore, what the people of Kashi commonly share among themselves, regardless of their being Hindus or Moslems, Brahmans or Jains, Vaishyas or Shudras, Saryuparis or Bengalis, rich or poor is the *banarsi* culture. This "reality culture" of Kashi also overlooks many of the traditional social values which are bred in the bones of narrow sectarianism, and it presents

a certain style of life which is abhorrent to both orthodox Hindus and Moslems.

The position of *banarsi* culture in the two main currents of cultural life in Kashi is shown in Figure 1. The total cultural complex of Kashi is represented in the diagram as APRMSK: in this, APRHSK forms the Hindu cultural complex and RMSB makes the Moslem cultural complex; between these two lies the cultural area RBSH which relates to *banarsi* culture. The structure of the complex APRHSK is founded on four pillars—(1) P (*pandits*) which cultivates and codifies the cultural tradition; (2) K (*karmakandis* and other ritual specialists and associates) which conducts and preserves the tradition; (3) S (*shilpis* and other secular institutions) which cultivates and promotes the tradition by offering secular incentives; and (4) R (*raja* and *dhanapatis*) which upholds the tradition by temporal means. The canopy of culture which these pillars support is V (the god Vishwanath), where H (common Hindus) and the corps of cultural specialists P, R, S, K, meet and interact with each other both socially and culturally. On this squarish complex when the superstructure of A (ascetics) is built, the Hindu culture assumes a much wider and complex form, for A becomes another meeting point for PRHSK. It has been explained earlier that A, the people of transcendental culture, is not guided by the social laws and hence ideally it may or may not interact with V which is a solidarious element in the Hindu cultural complex. Thus, A and V are the two independent and yet interlocking elements which intrinsically bind H and PRSK together. P, R, S, and K, are connected components, and although their temporal position is asymmetrical they are functionally interdependent. The totality of Kashi's cultural complex can be perceived only when M (Moslem community) is connected with APRHSK. But M is not related to APRSK in the manner of H, it is connected with S and R in material culture but is disconnected with PK. Thus, in the context of APRMSK the culture area of M is confined to RMSB. The third set of cultural complex is formed by the appearance of B (*banarsi*) which unlike H is loosely connected with the cultural axis AV, disconnected with P and K, and strongly connected with S and R. While on the one hand, because of its loose connection with AV, it fits into APRSK as a flexible ligament, on the other it links the culture area RMSB with the cultural complex of APRHSK. Thus,

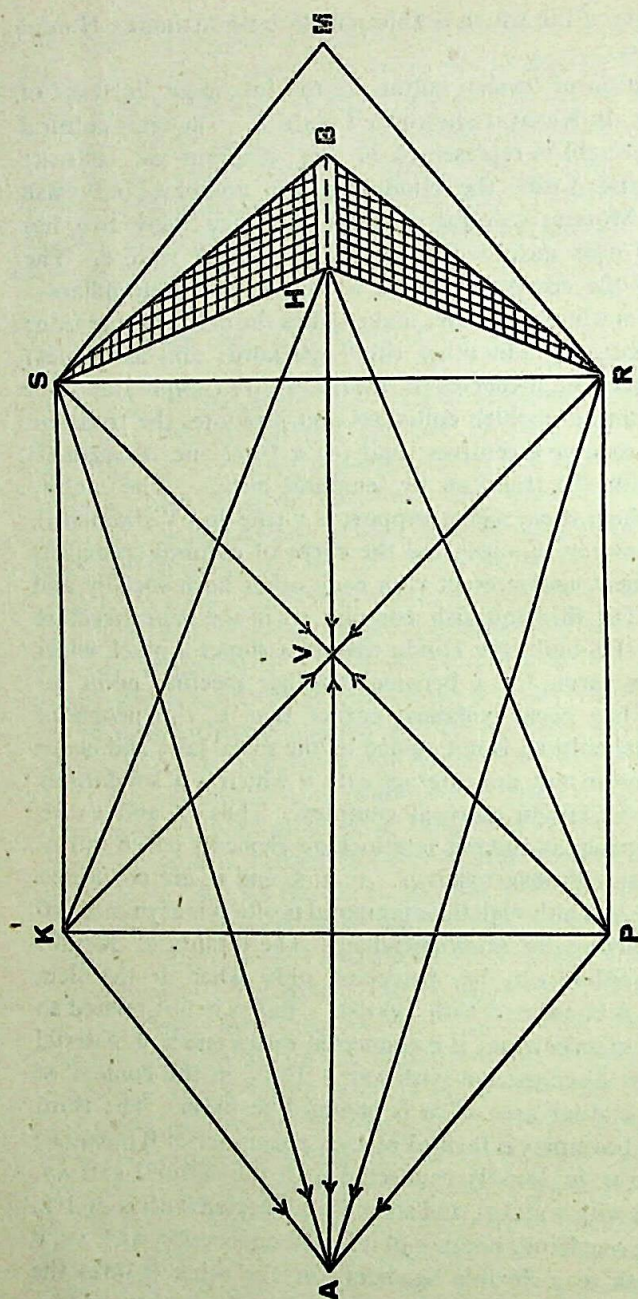


Figure 1 : The Structural Relationship between two Religions and three Cultures in Kashi
 [Hindu : APRHSK ; Moslem : RMSB; Banarsi : RBSH]

in the total cultural complex of Kashi RBSH occupies a distinct position.

The style of cultural life pursued and advocated in the cultural matrix of RBSH is what the people of Kashi regardless of their being H and M call *banarsi*. It must be clearly stated that the *banarsi* culture is not a true synthesis of Hindu and Moslem elements, like Sufism or Kabirpanth. For, it is not an abstract philosophy of the "other world", not an intellectual dialogue, but a particular style of life which is cultivated independent of ecclesiastical authority. But, to those who have not gone deep into the cultural life of Kashi this effluent *banarsi* culture may not be visible at the confluence of the two large streams, which go by the name of Hindu and Moslem in Kashi like the river Saraswati at the *triveni sangama* in Prayag.

Chapter Six

Organization of Tradition

From what has so far been discussed it comes out that with a long and continuous history, with varieties of cultural traditions, and as a city of contrasts, Kashi is not a simple phenomenon. The complexity lies in its excellence of building up a tradition, its mysterious way of preserving a tradition, and its unique style of handling the challenge of time and technology. Every civilization devises a distinct style of creation, preservation, and rejuvenation. It is this style that distinguishes one civilization from another. The continuance of tradition depends much on its intrinsic quality as also the external historical forces, but the historical forces can help only if they are adequately equipped with the defensive mechanism. To explain this, the following pages describe how Kashi organizes its tradition.

How Kashi Builds up a Tradition ?

The preceding discussions have given us a general idea as to how Kashi builds up its sacred tradition. Its salient features are specified in the following.

As has already been indicated, Kashi has a sacred territory marked by the *panchakosi* route which forms a circuit with a radius of sixteen kilometers. Within this territory, although Vishwanath is the presiding god, tradition holds that all the thirty-three *koti* Hindu gods and goddesses reside. The abodes of these gods and goddesses are marked by temples, trees, wells, and bathing *ghats*. The genius of forming this sacred territory has the following advantages.

By declaring that a large area is sacred, one has guarded the sacred against external destructions in course of history. A

single structure, howsoever large it may be, has always the possibility of its physical decay and destruction, but a large natural area has a much lesser possibility of losing its existence, unless overtaken by some natural calamity. Therefore, even the destruction of the external symbols, such as temples and sacred tanks in Kashi, does not affect its internal sacred character. When the temple of Vishwanath was demolished, Kashi continued its sacred function uninterrupted without the idol of Vishwanath for decades, and the people resigned to this by saying : *kankar kankar me Shankar* (Shankar, i.e. Vishwanath, resides in every pebble of Kashi). It means one cannot destroy Vishwanath by breaking the idol and demolishing the temple, and thus Vishwanath continues to stay in Kashi without any loss of identity or importance.

The myth that thirty-three *koti* gods and goddesses reside in Kashi denotes its all-embracing character. Kashi presents the totality of Hindu sacred tradition, for it accommodates all its variant strands. Because of this understanding all the *sampradays* have their tutelary deities in Kashi, and all of them hold this sacred city in equal esteem.

Another myth has also a leading role in strengthening the basic format of Kashi's cultural traditions. It is the myth of *moksha*. Kashi is the place where one gets *moksha* by just leaving one's mortal body at the cremation ground of Manikarnika *ghat*. This myth induced the believers in Hinduism to come to this place, which guarantees salvation, from all parts of India. It brought learned *pandits*, mostly late in their lives, from far and wide places. It means they came to Kashi when they were sufficiently matured in scholarship and learning. With these *pandits* came their devoted and learned disciples. This inflow enriched Kashi in its scholastic tradition; the cream of scholars in the country made Kashi their home. Also on the basis of this single myth Kashi became truly a cosmopolitan city and developed a composite culture. This sacred myth has a far reaching consequence. By implication it means that the citizens of Kashi just cannot afford to be parochial; they cannot stop people from other regions of India to settle down in Kashi unless they prefer Kashi to lose the universality of its sacred myth which is the axis of its continual functioning, its very life force.

How Kashi Preserves its Tradition?

The defensive mechanism by which Kashi preserves its tradition is already laid in the system of its building up a tradition. As indicated, the preservation of Kashi's sacred tradition has been possible on account of its wider application of sacred. The *Puranas* have not only described the sacred territory of Kashi but also prescribed the ritual of holy circumambulation which periodically defines the boundary of *Kashi-kshetra*. This has created a self-regulating system to guard the sacred territory of Kashi. But this is, of course, only an outer wall. Within the territory are three smaller units of sacred, viz., *Visheshwara khanda*, *Kedar khanda*, and *Omkar khanda*, whose boundaries also are laid down and fortified by the *antargrihi parikrama*. This kind of arrangement ensures that even those who are unable to take a longer and tiresome route may go to the sacred via a short-cut. A number of such alternatives have been provided in the systems, such as circumambulation of a single temple, or only visiting a temple, or by *nama-smarana* (remembering the name of god) at any place, which means even without visiting a temple.

The performance of *yatra* is another self-regulating system by which the tradition of sacred is perpetuated. As stated earlier, no religion can thrive merely on abstract philosophy untenanted with human emotions and the joy of earthly experiences. The aesthetics of rituals in Kashi has already been noted. Similarly, the *yatras* have been prescribed by the *Puranas* to revitalize the organization of the shrines periodically. But it is not merely a dry routine of ritual, it is a community worship, a periodical fair with many excitements. Those who are not particular about worshipping the deity of the shrine where the *yatra* is performed may participate in its less sacred functions. It is an occasion for people to give vent to some of their suppressed feelings. The Ahirs, for instance, take this opportunity to spend a whole night in the shrine singing *kajari* and *biraha* folksongs, which have hardly any religious content. It is also the night of lovers who meet on the symphony of sacred moments ignoring all temporal laws. Besides the *yatras*, each shrine has a special day for annual worship, called *sringara*, which is also an occasion for joy and festivity. It is this kind of incentive which Kashi

provides to her people for continuing the sacred tradition.

Kashi has provided sufficient secular incentives to all those who made it their home: artists, craftsmen, philosophers, traders, and ordinary persons regardless of their creeds and castes. It allowed itself to grow as a commercial city providing occupations to all, living with hopes and aspirations that it is the city of Annapoorna where no one dies of hunger. It apparently did not permit sectarian outlook to prevail upon the cultivation of excellence or else Babu Miyana, a Moslem, would not have been the specialist in Hindu *Shilapashastra*; Samsuddin, another Moslem, would not have been a *pandit* in Hindu astrology; Dr. A. Venis, a Christian, would not have been a Sanskrit *pandit*; Ulfatbai, a Moslem, would not have made an endowment to play *sahanaie* in the temple of Vishwanath by Moslem musicians; and the Moslem weavers would not have made the auspicious wedding garments for Hindu ladies.

Although classical Brahmanism remained a dominant element, Kashi permitted people to install different faiths and cultures in the manner they liked; it made the classical Brahmanism compromise whenever the situation so demanded. An interesting example comes from Kapildhara, one of the important shrines on the *panchakosi* route. Within the precinct of the main shrine are two idols named Bihari *guru* and Pattu *guru* worshipped by the pilgrims and devotees. The two *gurus*, who were Ahirs by caste, had been very popular as *kajari* singers and had a large following. When they died, the disciples wanted to pay them their homage by installing the idols of *gurus* in a sacred place. The Ahirs approached the priest of Kapildhara to provide them space for the idols of their *gurus*. The proposal was rejected at the first instance, but finally it was agreed upon when the Ahirs argued that their *gurus*, who were illiterate, had some supernatural vision and were composing *kajari* songs on the banks of the Ganges; that many of the songs they composed were devotional, and hence they had in them a ray of divine light. As soon as the Ahirs contended that their *gurus* were not ordinary persons but were in possession of spiritual power, the priests agreed to install the *gurus* by reciting some *mantras*. And since that day these *gurus* became part of the Brahmanic ritual complex in Kapildhara. This was not

the first time that such a compromise had been made by the Brahmanic Hinduism. In fact it is one of the standard methods by which the accretion to Hindu pantheon has been possible. This is also the method by which various groups of people have been trapped in the *indrajal* (the noose of the god Indra) of the Brahmanic caste system.¹

Sometimes the sacred provides a safety-valve to those who suppressed by social laws are unable to give a vent to their emotions. The examples of *yatras* and *sringaras* have already been cited. But there is another use of sacred. The explanation of the oddities of a *banarsi*, his *akhkharpan* and *phakkarpan* which correspond with the character of his tutelary god Shiva has already been mentioned. Such interpretation of sacred in support of social aberrations is frequent in Kashi.²

Kashi as a sacred city shelters a large number of widows most of them young widows. It has been the practice of Brahman families in most parts of India to send their widows to Kashi where they have to live all their life. Although a cruel method, the Brahmanic society unburdens itself from the problems of widows by creating a sacred retreat for them. Kashi is also a retreat for ascetics, and all kinds of socially and physically disabled persons. This makes the city a home for homeless.

Kashi holds people by generating a deep sense of attachment. Love for Kashi is supremely idealized by such a sacred myth as Shiva's agony in his exile from Kashi and his irresistible desire to throw away Divodas who had usurped Kashi—Shiva's beloved home. The story of Shiva's lamentation on this occasion is widely portrayed by the *kathabachaks*, and this helps in intensifying the love and veneration for Kashi in a systematic manner. This intense attachment is not restricted to Hindus alone. The illustrious Moslem poet Sheikh Ali Hazeen did not like to leave Banaras for any thing, and wanted

¹Baidyanath Saraswati ; 1972, "Harijans and the *Indrajal* of Caste", *Janata*, Vol. xxvii, No. 36.

²On asking the question why a *pandit* of Kashi should go to a prostitute, a very responsible informant told the author in all seriousness that the god Vishwanath leaves his temple at night to sleep with Visalakshi (a goddess enshrined not very far from Vishwanath temple) and hence there is nothing wrong if a *pandit* goes to a prostitute.

that even after his death his body should lie in the grave in this holy city where he noted that every scholar is treated like Rama and Lakshmana:

*Az Banaras na ravam, mabadi-am ast een ja;
Har Barahman-pisaray Lachhman-o-Ram ast een ja*

The Sheikh has further noted : "The people of Banaras admired and respected me and my talents in the like manner and that is what I longed for during all these roaming from Ispahan, my native place, to Banaras. Hence I feel satisfied to remain in Banaras till death". He died in 1180 A.D. and was buried in the *fatman* of Banaras, as desired by him.

In the marriage rituals among the Brahmans of South India, one of the rites which every bridegroom has to perform is *Kashi yatra abhinaya*, in which he pretends that he is going to be initiated into *sanyas* order in the city of Kashi. At this point his maternal uncle or would-be father-in-law appears and dissuades him from taking *sanyas* and offers him his daughter. This *Kashi yatra abhinaya* is performed at the time of sacred-thread ceremony among the other sections of Brahmans. It is how Kashi is ritually introduced at the time of *samskara* to each and every Brahman, and this is how Kashi becomes a household name in all parts of India. Kashi is to be remembered by all the Hindus when one is initiated into social life and then, the last wish of every Hindu is to leave his mortal body in this sacred city of Vishwanath. Sometimes even when somebody dies elsewhere, his corpse makes a pilgrimage to Kashi.

How Kashi Modernizes its Tradition?

From the foregoing it is obvious that Kashi has a unique way of preserving its tradition; it is equipped with a self-regulating protective mechanism; and it is guarded by a variety of specialists whose interest lies in the existence of its traditional format. In the circumstances, it seems difficult for any foreign element to penetrate Kashi's cultural traditions. But this does not mean that Kashi has remained unaffected by the passage of time. Indeed, no great civilization has ever remained indifferent towards the progress of time. The long and continuous history of

Kashi clearly indicates that this city has never closed its door for new ideas, new elements, and new comers. But it has its own method for receiving the foreign elements and treating them with discretion. This can be seen in a broad historical perspective, right from the time of the Buddha. But without going into deep past, we may cite two examples of a comparatively recent period of how Kashi handles the challenge of time.

Today, Kashi is an important city enjoying all the benefits of modernization that are normally available to any other city of this size and resources in India. Its temples are electrified since 1928, its craftsmen use latest tools and equipments, its *raees* have replaced their Banarsi *ekkas* by motor cars, its affluent inhabitants live in modern buildings, it possesses one of the most luxurious hotels of the country, and it publishes five daily newspapers, and a number of periodicals. The political awareness and importance of the city can be judged by the fact that Kashi has given three Chief Ministers to Uttar Pradesh and a Prime Minister to India within a period of twenty-five years. It is connected to other regions of the country by a wide network of rail and road communications, it has several large and small industries and a large industrial complex in the Diesel Locomotive Works. There are three universities in Kashi—the Varanaseya Sanskrit University, the Kashi Vidyapeetha, and the Banaras Hindu University. The way Kashi handles the challenge of modernization is best illustrated by its reaction to the inroads made by the Western education in the city.

The Banaras Government Sanskrit College was established in 1791 at the instance of Jonathan Duncan. In 1813, a Persian class with a *munshi* was started in this college for the purpose of teaching those students of the Hindu law who may wish to be appointed *pandits* in the British Court, but not a single *pandit* ever availed of this opportunity. Finally, in 1933, the Persian class was abolished. In 1841, it was again established under the orders of the Governor-General, but the situation remained the same, and in 1844 the Persian class was finally removed to the English College.¹

¹The English College was started in 1830 under the title of the Benaras English Seminary or the Benaras Government School.

Jayanarain Ghossal established the first English School in 1817 and opened the doors for English education. Christian Missionaries began to operate through educational programmes with a view to capturing the intellegentsia of Kashi, and this lead to the establishment of the Church Missionary Society in 1888. In 1897, Mrs. Annie Besant founded Hindu College and established the Theosophical Society to revitalize the faith in the Upanishadic Hinduism amongst those who were enamoured by English education and Western culture.

While Sanskrit education in the Government College was stabilizing and the British administration was patronizing the *pandits*, a new trend marked the scholastic life of Kashi. A number of scholars became interested in the development of Hindi—the language of the common people; notable among them were Bharatendu Harischandra, Jagannath Das Ratnakar, and Jayashankara Prasad. Babu Shiva Prasad Gupta created a press and propaganda machinery for the propagation of Hindi. In 1893, Nagari Pracharani Sabha was founded. Thus, in the later half of the nineteenth century the emphasis had begun to shift from the use of Sanskrit as the language of the elite to the use of Hindi. It is not without significance that the people who joined this camp were mostly non-Brahmans, indeed most of them were Vaishyas.

Now came the wave of Gandhijee's freedom movement which divided the *pandits* of Kashi into two groups : one vehemently opposing his attitude towards the *varanashram dharma* while the other wholeheartedly supporting his nationalism. Mahamana Malaviya wanted to instil the spirit of nationalism among the youth of the country through modern educational system and established the Banaras Hindu University in 1909. But the Mahamana also wanted them to be firmly entrenched in the glorious tradition of this country, which obviously meant to him the classical *varnashram* culture of India. And so today, his "modern" University has built a temple of Vishwanath, and holds regular classes on the *Geeta*; in the university buildings of the Hindu architecture (of course, only in exterior) modern sciences and technology are taught efficiently.

The nationalists who did not approve of the Mahamana's attitude towards the *varnashram dharma* and who believed that he was only putting old wine in new bottle established another

educational institution in Kashi in 1920. This was Kashi Vidyapeetha, which began to operate as a "national school" for revolutionaries and freedom fighters. Those who joined the Vidyapeetha were mostly anti-Brahman and non-Brahmans. In order to discredit the orthodox *sanatanis* they wanted to put on the Brahmanic garb, and the Vidyapeetha enrolled non-Brahmans, particularly the so-called untouchable castes and Moslems for a course leading to a diploma, called *shastri*—the title obviously derived from the Sanskrit system of learning. Thus, as soon as the organizers of the Vidyapeetha fell into the temptation of Sanskritic symbols the syndrome of Brahmanic *indrajal* began to operate. And so although the Vidyapeetha produced many Moslem and Harijan *shastris*, it eventually failed in altering the course of the Brahmanic thought in Kashi.

One of the founding members of Kashi Vidyapeetha was Dr. Sampurnananda, a Kayastha by caste, who wrote *Brahman sabdhanā*, deriding the Brahmans. But this affected his personal life and political career so intrinsically that he, essentially a liberal *sanatani*, soon was stricken with guilt-conscious. In order to expiate his "guilt" he founded the Varanaseya Sanskrit University with blessings from the Brahmans of Kashi. When an enlightened Vaishya Sanskritist was appointed as a Vice-Chancellor of this University, Brahmans raised a hue-and-cry, and subsequently he was replaced.

In brief, Kashi's approach to modernization verily reflects in the formation and functioning of these universities. Similar phenomenon exists in the functioning of the three important Vishwanath temples in Kashi.

In 1777, Rani Ahilayabai built the Vishwanath temple which was gilded by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. This temple commanded popularity, among the masses, but its doors were closed to the Harijans or, untouchables, for it represented the orthodox Brahmanic tradition. But, after Independence, a protest movement was launched and in 1956 the Harijans were allowed entry into the temple. Since then the Golden Vishwanath temple represents the liberal *sanatani* sacred tradition in Kashi. It is now a truly Hindu public temple.

On the entry of the Harijans into the Golden Vishwanath temple, the orthodox Brahmans under the leadership of Swami Karpatrijee built a new Vishwanath temple where no one (even

Brahman devotees) can enter into the sanctum sanctorum, as is the custom in most South Indian temples; only the priest is allowed to go inside. The organizers declared it as a private temple. The manner in which this temple was built and the *lingam* of Vishwanath was consecrated is significant. The orthodox Brahmans and ascetics who resisted the Harijan entry into the Golden Vishwanath temple were thrown away by the liberals. Immediately after this incident a rumour spread in the city that in the night previous to the entry of the Harijans, the *pandits* took away the "life-force" from the *lingam* of Vishwanath by performing the Vedic rite of *pranaharana*. When the new Vishwanath temple was built this "life-force" of Vishwanath was duly infused into the *lingam*, brought from the Narmada river. Whether the *pandits* performed such ritual and if they did, whether such a performance has the *shastric* validity may be argued upon. For, the *pandits* of Kashi had not unanimously or actively supported the orthodox movement. But what is significant about this movement is that a section of people in Kashi succeeded in establishing a new temple to preserve the pristine purity of the Brahmanic sacred tradition. The purpose of creating a myth of *pranaharana* of Vishwanath indicates the ingenuity of the *pandits* of Kashi.

The third temple of Vishwanath enshrined in the campus of the Banaras Hindu University represents the most modern phase of sacred tradition in Kashi; the temple is modern not only in its architecture but also in its approach to people; it welcomes visitors and pilgrims regardless of caste, religion, and nationality.

In the two examples cited above, there is some amount of parallelism so far as Kashi's approach to modern ideas is concerned. The three universities and the three Vishwanath temples represent three types of cultural traditions : (1) the Varanaseya Sanskrit University and the New Vishwanath temple symbolically represent the orthodox Brahmanic tradition; (2) the Kashi Vidyapeetha and the Golden Vishwanath temple represent the *sanatani* liberal tradition; and (3) the Banaras Hindu University with its magnificent Vishwanath temple and teachings of modern sciences and technology represents the modern view of tradition. However, the common factor which intrinsically binds them together is their unshakable faith in the Hindu Sanskritic traditions. Thus Kashi allows modernization to grow and develop

within its precinct, but keeps it at varying scales in cultural traditions in such a manner that their differences are under control—not rising beyond the limits of its essential cultural values.

The Nilakantha Syndrome

The control mechanisms by which Kashi preserves its essential character have already been indicated. To make these more specific it may be noted that there are four concentric fortresses which protect the essentials of its classical cultural traditions. An element totally acceptable to this system has to pass through the gates provided at these fortresses.

(1) At the first gate, the element seeking entry into Kashi's cultural system has to show sufficient evidence of adaptability, its capacity to function harmoniously with other elements. Since the system is governed by a flexible interpreting mechanism, it can easily accommodate a wide variety of elements.

(2) Once the element proves its worthiness at the first gate, it is required to present its utilitarian character at the second gate. It must have the capacity to provide secular incentives within the framework of a hereditary, non-competitive economic organization.

(3) At the third gate, the element has to undergo through the processes of sacerdotalization so that its temporal power is cut to size and it remains perpetually under the spell of supra-natural energy.

(4) Once treated with the charm of sacerdotalism the element is firmly entrenched into the system with no possibility to go back or to regain its original character. Indeed, it remains no longer a foreign element. But in order to occupy a key position in the functioning of the system it has to concede at the fourth gate the ordered hierarchy of the *trigunas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. Whereas at the first three gates the interpreting mechanism has shown considerable liberality, it now rigidly abides by the law of the *trigunas* and no compromise could ever be effected in interpreting this law.

This master plan of defence presupposes that different elements will find their place in different encinctes according to their responses to the challenging forces. It also raises the

possibility of receiving all and rejecting none, at least, at the first gate on account of its liberal policy of accommodating anyone who is willing to coexist without being intolerant to others. Hence, at the interactional level, in Kashi's cultural configuration different groups of people are placed on different scales of relationship. On account of this system varieties of cultural traditions coexist in Kashi harmoniously, and the varieties of groups have unequal participation in its total cultural complex. This raises a fundamental question regarding their integration as groups or cultural traditions.

A civilization may react to a foreign element in two different ways. It may either reject the element altogether or receive it by the process of gradual incorporation. When a new element is incorporated on par with the existing elements, it is called an integration of elements. This implies that no sooner the new element is incorporated it becomes an indispensable part of the whole and hence it begins to function uniformly with other elements in both time and space. But there can be a third way of receiving an element in which a new comer may or may not be treated on equal footing and yet it remains a part of the organic whole. In the former method the host cannot afford to keep the new element undigested, after a reasonable time, but in the case of the latter it is possible to do so.

There is a well-known myth in the Hindu *Pauranic* tradition about the churning of the ocean of milk by the *suras* and the *asuras* who used the serpent-king Vasuki as the churning rope and the mount Mandara as the churning stick. Out of this churning came (1) the dreadful poison, Halahala; (2) the upright medicineman, Dhanvantri; (3) the goddess of fortune and wealth, Lakshmi; (4) the happy Varuni (the grape vine); (5) the finest of horses, Uchaihshrava; (6) the pearl of jewels, Kaustubha; (7) the fabulous cow fulfilling all desires, Kamadhenu; (8) one of the five trees of paradise, Parijata; (9) the moon, Chandrama; (10) the elephant, Airavata; (11) the nymph, Rambha; (12) the bow, Dhanush; (13) the conch shell, Shankha; and finally (14) the immortal beverage, Amrita. While everyone was anxious to drink *amrita* no one was prepared to take the *halahala*. However, at the request of Brahma, the great god Shiva drank it, but held it at certain point in his throat or else

it would have killed him forthwith. This has turned his neck blue, since then he is called *nilakantha*, the one with a blue-neck. In the like manner, a civilization may accommodate an element which others are unable to digest. Kashi represents a civilization of this kind. For, it has borne the onslaughts of various waves of cultures, one after another, from the beginning of its history, and whenever some agreeable elements came, it duly absorbed them in its system; it ingeniously kept the offensive elements at appropriate places without any constraints, as its *nilakantha* syndrome began to operate. And hence today, Kashi is a city of contrasts, a city with an infinite capacity to cultivate excellence and bear obnoxious elements, such as the *gundas*, *thugs*, prostitutes, and murderers. It is also because of this that a *banarsi* comprehends all these unhealthy elements as the reality of life, the totality of human culture, and with all his oddities he is least worried about the challenge of time and modernization to his traditional values. He reacts to the processes of modernization with supreme confidence that nothing could destroy his *masti* and *phakkarpana* in the city of *nilakantha*.

Glossary

- Abhiṣeka* (*abhisheka*) sprinkling or dripping water over an idol
āchāraya spiritual preceptor
akhārā wrestling arena, a place for the assembly of ascetics
akkarapana headstrongness
amrita nectar or ambrosia
annakshetra alms-house where food is served free
antargrihi inner circuit of the holy circumambulation
anuṣṭhāna religious ceremony with a fixed aim
ārādhya venerable, worshipful
ārati the ritual worship by waving a lighted lamp or camphor circularly around the idol
artha wealth
arthakari vidyā learning which can give wealth
āshrama hermitage
asura demon
avadhoota ascetic of a certain class
- bābā* ascetic
belapatra leaf of the *bela* tree or wood-apple—*aegle marmelos*
bhaṅga the intoxicating hemp—*cannabis sativa*
bhoga experience of pleasure or pain, enjoyment
bīra, *vīra* valiant, the spirit of a hero who died while defending a just cause
birahā a kind of folk-song generally sung by the Ahirs of eastern Uttar Pradesh
brahma Ultimate reality, the Absolute
- chakravayūha* zigzag, an impregnable battle-array (as practised in ancient Indian military strategy)
charasa an intoxicating drug prepared from the flowers of hemp
chunarī a piece of cloth dyed by tie-and-dye method and put on as upper garment by ladies
dakṣhiṇā remuneration to the priest
dāna gift, donation

daṇḍa sacred staff

darshana divine visitation

dāsa servant

devaloka the world of gods

dhāma a place of worship: the four *dhamas* or Hindu places of pilgrimage are: (1) Jugganath Puri, (2) Badrinarayana, (3) Dwarka, and (4) Ramesh-waram

dhanapati wealthy person

dharmaśālā pilgrim's rest house

dwāpara yuga the second of the four ages of Hindu mythology

ekkā a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by one horse

gali street

gallā cash

gamachhā a towel

gānjā hashish

ganjeri the one who smokes hashish

ghanapāthī the one who can recite the various combinations and permutations of the *Vedic mantras*

godāna the gift of a cow to a Brahman with due ceremonies

grihi a householder

guṇḍā a rogue

gurukula a residential teaching institution

gurumukha initiated by a *guru*

halāhala poison

halwā-puri a kind of sweetmeat and fried cakes

indrajalā the noose of the god Indra, deception, illusion

jajman client

jyotirlinga an epithet of Shiva

kachaurī pastry of wheat flour in which bruised pulse is filled

kachchā clay built

kajari a kind of folksong sung by the Ahirs of eastern Uttar Pradesh

kalā the sixteenth part of the divinity, a degree, art

kalābattu gold or silver thread which is twisted on silk or cotton thread

kaliyuga the fourth (Iron) age of Hindu mythology

kāma eros

kathā a religious discourse

kathā-vāchaka the one who narrates the episodes of gods

keertaniya the one who sings in concert in praise of gods

khaṇḍa segment

kosa a distance of two miles

• *koti* ten millions

- kṣetra* sacred territory
kṣetra sanyāsa a vow of confinement to a place of pilgrimage for whole life
kunkum archana offering vermilion to a deity
langarā āma a variety of mango grown in parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh.
laukika oral tradition, folk
līnga phallus
mahāl a ward of a town
maḥantā chief priest or ascetic
mahāshmasānā the great cremation ground
mandir temple
manokāmanā līnga the phallus of Shiva which fulfils earthly human desires
mantra incantation
masti ardent passion, wantonness, *joī de vivre*
maṭha hermitage
maulavi a learned Moslem, one who is versed in Arabic and Persian literature
moksha final liberation, salvation
muktibhawana shelter house for the old
munshī a writer, a scribe, an Urdu teacher
nāma-smaraṇa remembering the name of god
nlakanṭha an epithet of Shiva, the blue jay
nirnaya decision
nīṣṭhā faith combined with devotion
nivṛtti renunciation
paddhati a method, decision
pahalwān a wrestler
pañchakoṣī a holy circuit with a radius of sixteen kms
pañchopachāra offering five articles of worship: (1) perfume, (2) flowers, (3) incense, (4) wick-lamp, and (5) food to the deity, five times a day: (1) before sunrise, (2) after sunrise, (3) noon, (4) evening, and (5) night
pandita a learned Brahman, one who is especially versed in Sanskrit learning
paramparā tradition
parā saṁskṛiti transcendental culture
pārāyaṇa recitation
pārī turn
parikramā circumambulation
pāṭhashālā school
peeṭha one of the four centres of ascetics which the *adya* Shankaracharya (8th century A.D.) had established in four corners of India, viz., Puri in the east: Joshī *maṭha* in the north, Dwarka in the west, and Sringeri in the south

phakkaṭṭapa a Bohemian-type person who is contented with the bare minimum, carefree, and unconventional in many respects
pinḍadāna offerings to manes
pitṛishrāddha ancestor worship
prakṛitī world-nature, the lower-nature, *avyakta*
prāṇaharaṇa taking out the life-force
pravachana religious discourse
pravṛtī occupation
pūjana worship
pūjāri the temple priest
puruṣa the person, the *Ātmān*

rabari a kind of sweetmeat, boiled milk reduced into thick paste
raees a noble man, a rich person
riṣi a hermit

sādhanā procedure that leads on to *siddhi*
sahanāi a clarionet
saṃpradāya sect
samskāra sacramental rite
saṃtāni follower of the orthodox Brahmanism
sankṛāṭa obstacle, crisis
saṃyāsī an ascetic who has been ordained in the spiritual order by performing *Virāja homa*
śālistṛāma a kind of Vishnu's idol in black stone
shankha a conch shell
śāstra scripture
śāstrārtha a debate especially on scriptural matters
śāstrī the one who is versed in sacred lore
shilpī an artist
śiṣhya a disciple
shivālā the temple of Shiva
shrāddha mortuary rite, the offering of water, food, etc., to Brahmins in honour of manes
śṛṅgāra decoration
siddha mahātmā an ascetic endowed with supernatural power
siddhi supernatural power
ṣoḍasopachāra sixteen acts of worship : (1) invocation, (2) offering a seat, (3) washing the feet, (4) oblation, (5) sipping water, (6) bathing, (7) clothing, (8) offering a sacred thread, (9) offering perfume, (10) offering flowers, (11) offering incense, (12) waving a wick-lamp, (13) offering food, (14) salutation, (15) circumambulation, and (16) completion
śriyantra a *tantric* object of worship made of stone or metal on which geometric drawings are made
sthāndhārī resident
sura god
swarga paradise, heaven

- tablā* a small tambourine
takhata a wooden seat
tapas austerity
tāraka mantra the *mantra* by which Shiva liberates the person who dies in Kashi
tattva element
thuga a cut-throat, cheat
tilaka a mark made on the forehead either as an emblem of sect or for ornament
tirtha a place of pilgrimage, shrine
tirtha purohita shrine priest
tongā a two-wheeled carriage drawn by one horse
tretā yuga the third *yuga*, the Silver age of Hindu mythology
triṣṇa an aggregate of the three principal qualities of human nature—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*
trisāla a trident
triveṇī sangama the confluence of the three rivers, viz., the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the Saraswati at Prayag
tulsi the holy basil
turiyāteeta the highest stage of blessedness
ulemā the priestly class among the Moslems
uttaravāhīnī flowing in northern direction
vaikunṭha chaturdaśī a festive occasion when a Hindu fasts so that he may reside in the paradise of Vishnu after his death.
varṇāśrama the caste system of the Hindus which recognizes four *varnas* or the four classes of people, viz., (1) Brahmana, (2) Kshatriya, (3) Vaishya, and (4) Shudra, and four successive stages in life : (1) Brahmacharya, (2) Grahastha, (3) Vanaprastha and (4) Sanyas
virakta a Vaishnava ascetic, free from worldly attachment
vritti profession
yajña sacrifice
yati an ascetic, an anchorite who has completely subdued his passions
yātrā religious fairs
yuga an epoch, the ages of the world (which are supposed to be four according to the *Puranas*)

Index

- abhiseka* 38, 40
 Abul Fazal 5
Adi Brahma Purana 6
 Aditya 34, 38
 Adivisheshwara 43
 Advaita School 39
 Agiyabir 35, 37, 38, 39
Agni Purana 6
 Ahilyabai, the queen of Indore 8, 64
 Ahir 1, 35, 46, 50, 58, 59
 Airavata 67
 Ajatasatru, the king of Kashi 9
 Ajmer 8, 34
 Akbar 8
akhara 1, 15
 Gadhanath 1
 Awahana Akhara Dasnam
 Shambhu Panch 1
 Bhagwandasji-ka-akhara
 Khak-chauk 1
akkharpan 49, 50, 60
 Ala-Uddin 7, 33
 Ali Hazeen, Sheikh 60-1
amrita 67
 animal sacrifice 36
annakshetra 32
 Annapoorna 36, 51, 59
 Annie Besant 9, 62
anushtanis, functions of 27-8
Arthasastra 20
 Arya Samaji 14
 Aryan settlements, 6
 ascetics
 *compared to the polestar 16
 *in the Mithun and Baniyan Varanasi 16
 linguism and 16
 organization of 14-9
 population of 14-5
 relationship with householders 16-7
 social responsibility of 17-8
 sthandhari 17
 universalistic character of 15-6
ashrama 15
 Assantesse 16
 Assi, river 11, 30, 38
asuras 67
aughar 14, 37
 Aughar-ki-takiya 37, 40
 Aurangzeb 8
awadhoota, style of life 19
 Ayodhya 2, 3, 15
Ayurveda 20
 Babu Miyana 30, 59
 Baijabai, the queen of Gwalior 8
 Ballaldeva 3
 Banaras 1, 5, 30, 34, 61
 Banaras Government Sanskrit College 62
 Banaras Hindu University, 9, 42, 62, 65
banarsi 49, 50, 52, 53, 55, 60, 68
banarsi culture, structure of 53-5
 Banarsi silk 10, 43
banarsi-ness 49, 50, 51
 barbers 29, 49
belpatra 36
 Bengali 16, 36, 43, 50, 52
 Benoit 10

- bhaddars*, pilgrim hunters 26-7
 assuming the role of *pandas* 27
 phonetic similarity to *bhattara*,
 priests of Shiva temples in Tamil
 Nadu 26
Bhagawata 6
 Bhario 34, 38
bhakti 41
bhang seller 47
 Bharabhujas 35
 Bharata Dharma Maha Mandala
 9, 18, 21
 Bharata Mata Mendir 9
 Bharatendu Harischandra 9, 63
 Bhawani, Rani 31
 Bheema *baba* 18
 Bhoja, Raja 3
Bhojaprabandha 3
Bhrigusamhita 20
 Bihari *guru* 59
birs 35, 39
 boatman, acting as priest 29
bodhisattvas 35
 Brahma 34, 67
 Brahman 10, 13, 16, 42, 46, 47,
 49, 50
 Kannada 10
 Maharashtra 10, 13, 20, 23, 25,
 27, 36
 self-imposed poverty of 21
 South Indian 36
brahmada 3
Brahmasutra 7
Brahmaivaivarta Purana 6
 Buddha, the 6, 7, 9, 62
 Buddhism, Mahayana 35
 Buddhist, Buddha 10, 14
 philosophy 20
 Chaitanyadeva 7
chakravyuha 1, 43
 Chandrama 67
 Chedis, the rule of 7
 Cheta Singh, Raja 30
Chhatapatimata 35, 44
 Christian 59
 Christian Missionaries 63
 Christianity 41
 Church Missionary Society 9, 62
 classical music, patronage to 29
 culinary art 29
 cultural complex of Kashi, contri-
 butions of Kashi Raj in 31
 cultural traditions
 oral 37-8
 textual 38-9
 three types of 37-40
 transcendental 39-40
 cultural traditions of Kash
 building up of 56-7
 modernization of 61-6
 preservation of 58-61, 66-7
dadara 10
 Dadupanthi 14
 Daitrabir 35
 Dandi *sanyasi* 14, 15, 39, 40, 42
 Darasikoha 8
darshana 37, 38
dasa 41
Dasnama 17
 Dasnami Naga *sanyasis* 1, 8, 14, 15
 Dasnami *sanyasis* 14, 15
 Datar, Vishwanath Shastri 13
 Dayananda, Swami 9
 deities
 Vaishnava 34, 35
 Shaiva 35
 Shakta 35, 36
 Deoghar 24, 25, 26, 44
 Deoriabir 35
Devi Bhagwata 6
dhamas 33
dhanapatis 14, 35
 Dhanvantri, the medicine man 67
 Dharma Sangha, 9, 18, 21
dharmadhikari 22
dharmasala 32
Dharmashastra 20

- dhruvatarā* 16
 Digpatia 30
 dispensaries, Ayurvedic 16
 Homeopathic 16
 Divodas 41,42,60
 Doma 2,3,29,35,47
 Dravida, Rajeshwar Shastri 2
 Duncan, Jonathan 62
 Durga 36
 Dwarka 2,15,17
 Fa Hien 7,9,12,33
faqueers 52
fatman 61
 florists 28
 Gahadawala, the rule of 7
 Gajanan 19
 Gandhi, Mahtma 9,20,63
 Ganesh 24
Gangapujan 38
Gangaputra 23
 Ganges 1,2,3,9,11,23,28,37,38,39,42,
 46,59
 offering *chunari* to 29
 Gangetic Valley 69
ganja 1,17,38
ganjeri 17
 Garcebdasi 14
 Gargya 7
 Gauda Brahman 20
 Gauriya 14
 Gaya 24,25,26
Geeta 63
ghanapathi 20
ghar-chari tax 8
ghat
 cremation 1,40,47
 Dasashwamedh 1,2,38
 Manikarnika 2,8,11,38,40,43,47,57
 Manmandir 8
 Panchaganga 38
 Sankatha 43
ghatias 24,27,28
 functions of 23
Gheesapanthi 14
 Ghossal, Maharaja Jainarain 8,63
 Godaie Maharaj 29
godan 24
 Golden Vishwanath temple 64,65
 Gopi Krishna 29
 Gorakhapantha 14
grihi 16,17
gumastas, functions of 26,27,28
gundas 43,51,68
 Gupta rule 7
 Gupta, Shiva Prasad 63
guru 16,59
gurumukha 16
 Gyanananda, Swami 9,18
 Gyanbapi, renovation of 8
 Gyan *sampradaya* 14
halahala 67
 Haridwara 2
 Harihar *sampradaya* 14
 Harijan 64,65
 Harischandra, Raja 3,29
 Hastinapur 6,30
 Hindi 16
 development of 63
 Hindu 2,4,6,7,8,10,15,28,30,31,33,34
 41,42,43,45,46,49,52,53,55,56,59,
 60,61
 Hindu Code Bill 21
 Huien Tsang 7,9
 Hunter, Sir William 34
 ideal Brahman, image of 21
 Indra 4
indrajāl
 of the Brahmanic caste system 60
 syndrome 64
 Isipatan 9
 Islam 41
 Ispahan 61
 ivory work 29
Jabalopanisada 6
 Jaichanda 8
 Jain 9,10,49,52

- Jain, philosophy 20
 Jain *Tirthanakara* 6,7
 Jainism 6
 Jai Singh, Raja of Jaipur 8
jajman 25
jajmani 26,27
Jatakas 5
 Jayadeva 46
 Jha, Kashi Nath 2
 Jnaneshwara, *santa* 7
 Jogamaya 19
 Joshi Brahman 26
 Joshi *matha* 17
 Jungambari *matha* 7
iyotirlinga 36,44,47

 Kabir 6,7
 Kabirpanth 55
 Kabirpanthi 14,18
 Kabiraj, Gopinath 2,21
kajari 58,59
kalabattu 29
kali andhi 8
 Kalidas 46
 Kalua Doma, the legendary king
 of Kashi 2
kama 43
 Kamdhenu 67
 Kanchi 2
 Kannada 10,16
 Kannauja 30
 Kapildhara 59
karmakanda 20
karmakandis 25,26,53
 assuming the role of *panda* 25-26
 specialists in Vedic rites 23
 Karpatrijee, Swami 9,18,64
 Kasa, the king of Kashi 5
 Kashi
 centre of the first created spot on
 the earth 5
 city of affluence and grinding
 poverty 50-2
 city of *bhoga* and *moksha* 49-50
 city of cultural pluralism 50
 pastoral city 51
 patronage of Hindu kings to
 30-1
 patronage of wealthy merchants
 and big business houses to 32
 Pauranic geography of 11
 sacred geography of 38
 settlement pattern of 42-3
 thirty-three *koti* shrines and half
 a million image in 33
 Kashi Raj, 8
 capital outside the sacred territory
 30
 Kashi Raj Trust 31
 Kashi Vidyapeetha 7,62,64,65
Kashi yatra abhinaya 61
Kashi-kshetra 41,42,58
 description of 11-12
 Kedar *khanda* 11,58
 Omkar *khanda* 11,58
 Visheshwara *khanda* 11,58
katha 16
kathabachakas 17,28,60
 functions of 27
 Kausambi 6,7
Kaustubha, the peral of jewels 67
 Kayastha 64
 Keenaram-ka-astar 37,40
keertanias, functions of 27,28
 Khajuraho 46
 Khan, Bismillah 29
 Kharanan 17
 Khokhimata 35,44
 Konarak 46
 Kosala 6,7
 Krimikunda 37,39
 Krishna Pranami 14
kshetra sanyas 2
kum-kum archana 36

 Lahurabir 35,37
 Lakshmana 61
 Lakshmi, goddess of wealth 34,36,67
laukie 37,38,40

- Law, Banaras School of 10
 Hindu 62
 Lazarus 34
Linga Purana 6
 liquor, spirituous 36

 Madhva 14
 Magadha 6,7
Mahabharata 6
 Mahadeo, 32
 Bharbhuteshwara 11
 Brahmeshwara 11
 Gokarneshwara 11
 Madhyameshwara 11
 Manikarnikeshwara 11
mahals
 kachcha mahal 42
 pucca mahal 41,43
mahantha of Viswanath temple 25
Mahanusasnum 17
 Maharashtra 10,13,20,23,25,27,36
mahasmathan, the great cremation
 ground 50
 Maheshwara 10
 Maithila 43,50
 Malaviya, Mahamana 63
 Mandara, mountain 67
 Mangala Gauri 34,38
 Manjhiś 35
manokamana linga 44
 Man Singh, Raja 34
mantras 24,27,39
 Manu 5
 Marathi 16,43,50
Markande Purana 6
masti 49,50,68
matha 7,15,16,17,42
 Mathur 2,15
Matsya Purana 6
maulavi 52
 Mecca 1
Minamsa 20
Mitakshara 10

 Mithila 10
 Mittal, Satya Prakash 48
 Moghul 5
moksha 41,43,44,47,48
 myth of 57
 monasteries, Buddhist 33
 Moslem 30,33,43,46,49,50,52,53,55,
 57,64
 mosques 34
 movement
 Gandhijee's freedom movement
 20,63
 Gohatya andolan 21
 Goraiasahi movement
 Harijan entry into Vishwanath
 temple 21,65
 Ranihalla movement 9
 Quit India movement 9
muktibhawan 32
munshi 62

 Nagari Pracharini Sabha 7,63
nama-smarana 58
 Nanak, Guru
Naradiya Purana 6
 Narmada, river 65
 Nepal 16,36
 Nialtagin 7
 Nihanga Sikh 14
Nilakantha 1,68
 syndrome 66-8
 Nimarka 14
 Nirmale 14
*Nirmal Kumar Bose Memorial
 Foundation* 48
nistha 20
nivrti 17
Nyaya-Vaisesika 20

 Oudh, Nawab of 8

Padma Purana 6,11
 Panchadeo 40
panchakosi kshetra 11,56
 Panchakot 30
panchopachar, method of worship 35

- panda* 1,4,27,28,37
 ambiguity in the usage of the term 24
 assuming the role of *karmakandi* 25
 different from those of Gaya, Deoghar and Puri 24, 25, 26
 functionally different from *ghatia*, *karmakandi*, *pujari* 25-6
 functions of 24-6
Pandavas 6
pandits 2,7,10,14,19,20,21,22,31,43, 49,51,52,53,57,60,63,65
 custodians of textual cultural tradition 19-21
 in British Court 62
 leading austere life 21
 promoting the *varna* order 20-1
 opposing Gandhijee's freedom movement 20-1
 their subject of specialization 20
Pannini's grammar 10
Paramhansa sanyasi 14,15
parasanskriti 37
Parasara Smriti 6
Paraswanath 6,7
pari system 46
Parijat, the tree of paradise 67
parikrama
 antargrihi 12,38,58
 panchakosi 11-2,13,38,56,59
Parvati 19,36
Parvati tattva 19
pathasala 16,43
Pattu guru 59
peetha 17,18
 perfume-making 29
 Persian 62
Peshawari 16
phakkarpan 49,50,60,68
phallus 44
 pilgrimage, system of 42
pinda 39
pindadan 38,39
 potter 37,38,39,42
Prajapita Brahmakumari 14
Prakriti 36
pranaharana, a Vedic rite 65
Prasad, Jayashankara 63
Pratihara, the rule of 7
pravaçhan, religious discourse 16
pravriti 17
Prayaga 55
Princep 34
 prostitute 51,68
pujari 22,25
Puranas 5,10,11,12,13,20,58
Puri 15,17,25,32
puris 2,33
Purush 36
Qutb-Uddin-Aibak 7
raees 51,52,62
Raidas 7
Raidasi 18
Raja of Kashi
 guardian of cultural traditions 31-2
 representative of Vishwanath 52
Rama 61
Rama Rajya Parishada 21
Ramacharitmanas 7
Ramakrishna Paramhansa 9
Ramaleela 31
Ramanagar 8,31
Ramananda 6,7
Ramanandi 14,15,18
Ramanujacharya 7
Ramanuji 14,15
Ramayana 3,6
Rambha, the nymph 67
Ranjeet Singh, Maharaja 8,64
Ratnakar, Jagannath Das 63
 reality culture 48,49,50,52
rishi 5
 Vedic 41
 ritual associates 28-9
 ritual specialists 22-4
 overlapping functions of 28
Riwan 30
Rome 1

- sacred
 an industry 45-6
 in tune with secular 46-7
 reversing the course of 41
sacred complex, unequal participation in 36-40
sacred performance 43-5
 varieties of 35-6
sadhana 40
sadhu
 Ramawat 1
 wandering 17
sahanaie 59
Sahu, Jijhakkara 51
Sakhi *sampradaya* 14
Sampoornananda 64
sampradaya 14,15,57
samskara 61
Samsuddin, a *pandit* in Hindu astrology 59
Sanata Kumar Purana 6
sanatani 63,64,65
 orthodox 16,18
Sankatamochan Hanuman 44
Sankathaji 44
Sankha Smriti 6
Sankhya Yoga 20
sanyas, method of initiation into 39
sanyasi 1,49
Saraswati, Baidyanath 15,36,37,48, 60
Saraswati, goddess 34,38
Saraswati, river 55
Sarnath 7
Saryupari 24,25,26,52
satis 35,39
sattva 66
saturn 34
sculptors, Gauda Brahmins 30
 Gonds from Mirzapur 30
 Moslem 30
secular, synonymus with profane 41
Semitic culture 41
Shahjahan 8,34
Shakti 36
shaligram 24
Shankar 57
Shankaracharya, 7,17
 the *peethas* of 17
shankha 11,12,67
shastrartha 9,10
shastri 64
shastric or *shastriya* 37,38,40,46
Shilpashastra 30,59
shilpis 53
Shitala 36,49
Shiva 1,2,3,26,30,34,35,36,38,41,50, 60,67-8
Shiva Kashi 11
Shiva Purana 6
Shivajee 8
shivatalas 34
shrines, varieties of 33-5
Shudras 49,52
siddha mahatma 19
siddhi 19
Sikandar Lodi 7,33
Singh, Dr Bibhuti Narain 31
Sinha, Surajit 15
Sitarabai 29
Skanda Purana 2,6,11,16,34,38,42
sodasopachar paddhati, method of worship 35
sradha 38,39
sringara 45,58,60
Sringeri 17
sriyantra 30
Sufism 55
Sun god 34
Suparasanath 6,7
suras 67
Swaminarayana 14
swarga 41
Syadabad Maha Vidyalaya 9
Takshashila 9
tamas 66
Tantra 20
tantric paddhati, method of worship 35
tapas 41
tappa 10
taraka mantra 3

- Tegh Bahadur, Guru 8
 temple priests, consideration of
 caste for 22
 temples, demolition of 7,8,33-4, 57
 terracotta goat 36
 textual tradition, specialists in 22
 theorists and practioners, position
 in Indian classical tradition of
 22
 Theosophical Society 63
thugs 43,68
tirthas 38
tirtha purohita 25
 Tirtha Purohit Sangh 26
 Todarmal 8
trigunas 66
Triveni sangam 55
tulsi leaf 36
 Tulsidas, *sant* 3,8
turiyateeta, highest stage in asceti-
 cism 18
 Turko-Afghan domination 7

Uchailshrava, the horse 67
 Udaipur 30
 Udasi 14
Ulema 52
 Ulfatbai 59
 Upanishadic Hinduism 63
 Uttar Panchal 6

Vaikuntha chaturdasi 36
 Vaishnava 14,15,16
 Vaishnavism 7
 Vaishyas 49,52,63,64
 Vallabha 14
 Vallabhacharaya 7
Vamana Purana 6
 Varanaseya Sanskrit University 62,
 64,65
 Varanasi 1,3,5,8,11,12
varna, inequality of 21
varnashrama 17,21
varnashrama dharma 63
 Varnashrama Swaraja Sangha 21
 Varuna, river 11,30,38
Varuni, the grape vine 67

Vasuki, the serpent king 67
Veda 10,20,31
Veda parayana 31
Vedanta 20
 Veershaivism 7,14
 Venis, Dr A 59
 vermilion, offering of 35-6
 Vidwata Parishada 21
 Vidyapati 46
 Vijnaneshwara, author of the
 Mitakshara 10
 Vinayaka, 34,38
 Dehal 11
 Pasupani 11
 Sodas 11
Virakta Vaishnava 3
 Visalakshi 60
 Visheshwara 12,43
 Vishnu 5,24,35,36,38
 Vishnu Kashi 11
 Vishnuswami 14
 Vishwanath (temple) 2,7,8,12,22,25,
 31,35,36,37,38,45,49,52,53,57,60
 61,64
Vyakarana 20

 wall-painting, ritualization of 29-30
 Waren Hastings 8
 Wazid Ali Sah 8
 weaving 29
 widows 51,60

yajna 16
yajnopaveeta, the sacred thread cere-
 mony 16,61
Yajurveda 6
yati and *sati* 19
yatra 12,13,58,60
 ekatirthi 38
 iritirthi 38
 pancha tirthi 38
*yatra*wals, functions of 26,27
yuga 11
 Dwapara 11
 Kali 11
 Satyajit वेदाङ्ग पुस्तकालय
 Treta 11
 र. ग. सी. ।



3
2
1
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100



161

19-12-79

मुमुक्षु भवन वैद वेदांग विद्यालय
ग्रन्थाक्षर
कागद क्रमांक.....1022.....
दिनांक.....

Dr Baidyanath Saraswati is associated with the Anthropological Survey of India for nearly 30 years. He has done extensive fieldwork all over India on various aspects of Indian civilization. Among his other works are *Pottery Techniques in Prehistoric India* (co-author, N K Behar), *Contributions to the Understanding of Indian Civilization, Pottery-making Cultures and Indian Civilization, Organization of Asceticism in Kashi* (co-author, Surajit Sinha), *Brahmanic Ritual Traditions: the Crucible of Time, and the Pandits of Kashi*. Dr Saraswati has been a Visiting Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study since 1969.

Indian institute of advanced stud